

Ike Glidden in Maine



A. D. McFaul



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To P. L. Hughes:

With Compliments of his
friend,

A. D. McFarland



DENNIS MADE THE FATAL ANNOUNCEMENT, "HE'S AS BLOIND AS A BAT."

IKE GLIDDEN IN MAINE

A STORY OF RURAL LIFE
IN A YANKEE DISTRICT

BY
A. D. McFAUL

ILLUSTRATED



DICKERMAN PUBLISHING CO.
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

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Plimpton Press
Printers and Binders, Norwood, Mass.
U. S. A.

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CHAPTER I.

URIAH JONES' COW.

THAT'S so, Ike Glidden's mischev'ous as the old Scratch," said Uriah Jones as he sat down among the loafers who had congregated on the Post Office steps to enjoy the evening air and discuss the latest pranks of the most stirring boy in town. "Yes, and I'd make him smart fer it," responded one of the crowd.

"Here comes his father after the mail, and I'd just pitch inter him and make him settle for that boy's capers," earnestly said a prominent member of the gathering.

Mr. Glidden drove up, alighted from the wagon and was ascending the steps, when Uriah Jones accosted him, blurting out in an emphatic manner, "Be you a-goin' ter pay fer that cow?"

Farmer Glidden, whose gentle face bore lines of trouble, looked calmly into the enraged and distorted visage of his neighbor. The pain and humiliation caused by the tale unfolded to him by that irate individual deprived him for the moment of the power to express his thoughts. Then, in a kindly tone, he spoke. "Tell ye what, neighbor Jones, if my boy Ike did as ye say he did — tied Lambert's milk cans to your cow's tail — and any harm comes of it, I'll make it right if I have to sell the best cow I've got. But I hain't so sure my boy Ike's to blame for half what's laid agin' him."

“Your boy Ike?” indignantly replied Jones. “Yer boy Ike’s a tender innocent, he is! Oh, of course he’s as innocent as a child! It wuzn’t your boy Ike who broke up prayer-meetin’ Wednesday night by puttin’ kyann pepper on the stove? It wuzn’t your boy Ike who stuffed poor Charley Burr’s chimney up and smoked him out on Christmas eve? Oh no, it couldn’t be your boy Ike who put Billy Wilson in my orchard one night last fall and got him to stuff his pant legs with my apples till he couldn’t walk, and then hollered fer me, so’t I’d catch the Widder Wilson’s boy helpless? Oh no, course not, it warn’t your boy Ike who tied Lambert’s cans to my cow’s tail? Of course folks who saw the cow start like a crazy creeter with the cans a-bangin’ and the milk flyin’ behind her and Ike clappin’ his hands to his bosom and laffin’ at the show, was mistaken? It warn’t your little innocent Ike that did all these things? It was some other boy that looks so much like your pet Ike. But then, the best cow I’ve got went crazy mad into the woods yesterday with a hundred men and boys tryin’ to find her. Tell yer what it is, Joe Glidden, you pay fer that cow or your boy’ll be taken care of till he learns how to behave hisself. I’ve stood all of his tantrums I’m a-goin’ to. I hain’t a-goin’ ter loose any more property by him without pay fer it.”

“Well, neighbor Jones, ruther than ter have my boy disgraced by court proceedings, I’ll pay yer thirty dollars fer ther cow and take my chances of ever finding her. But mind yer, I don’t believe my boy Ike ever did it. I allow he’s wild and fond of fun and does things that some boys wouldn’t think of doing, but Ike’s tender-

hearted and honest and never wilfully injured anything or anybody."

"I kin understand ye a-lovin' yer boy, Joe, but I can't understand how 'tis ye can't see that fer the past four years or more, sence Ike was big enough ter shy a rock or toot a horn, he's turned our quiet neighborhood into a noisy, distracted community, and I'll bet a dollar out of this thirty yer jest gave me that your boy Ike is into some mischief this minute," with which final expression of disapproval Farmer Jones pocketed the price of the cow and departed.

That afternoon, on the hills surrounding the town of Bolton, the echoes were awakened by the voices of men and boys searching the woods for Jones' cow and Lambert's milk cans. Apart from the others were Ike Glidden, the terror of Bolton, and his younger brother Hiram. Ike said, "What possessed you, Hiram Glidden, to do such an awful thing? Didn't you know that it is cruel to frighten a poor old cow in that way? I couldn't help laughing at the sight of poor Mooley slinking it for the woods with the cans and milk flying. It was too bad though. I've done lots of tricks, but I never would have done such a thing. Now, it's bad enough to have father and mother worrying about me, for I can't seem to steer clear of mischief; but, if they learn that you would cut up like this, it would worry them both to death. You'd better make up your mind you won't cut up any more capers and just lay the blame on me. I can stand it, I guess, and as the boys seem to be goin' back you follow the crowd home and set father and mother at rest about it, and I'll stay here till I get the cow."

It was late when Ike reached home, tired and wet, but joyous. He had descended the hillside to follow around the shore of a pond, where he found Jones' cow on a point of land running out into the water of the pond. After constructing a fence-like structure across the short opening that would serve as a means of escape from the peninsula to the mainland, he left her to recover her natural peace of mind and to be recovered by her owner in the morning, seemingly none the worse for her recent excitement.

Joe Glidden's faith in his boy's goodness and his paternal joy in the thought that his son, of all the men and boys who joined in the hunt, was the one to find the lost animal, well-nigh overcame the sense of the enormity of the offence of which Ike was accused. He undertook, however, to admonish his son and chide him for the wickedness of the deed. But when Ike truthfully and straight-forwardly denied his guilt, the father's faith in his son triumphed, and to him at least the affair was henceforth closed. But, if it was so with Mr. Glidden, not so was it with the Jones family.

At school next day Dicky Jones, a youth of Ike's age, but of somewhat overbearing manner, taunted Ike on the playground with being a subject for the reform school, and later in school hours Dicky drew on his slate a rude picture of a cow with milk-can ornaments on her tail, and wrote under it, "How old Joe Glidden got a good cow cheap." Ike's wrath was aroused so quickly that with one blow he laid Dicky on the floor, with a crash that shook the building. The school was in an uproar instantly. The master, seeing Ike stoop

over his fallen enemy, and with fear for Dicky's safety, mingled with indignation at such a wilful disregard of discipline by one of his pupils, struck Ike across the shoulders with his rule a blow that made him roar with pain. The master seemed to have lost his reason, and continued to belabor the unfortunate Ike, who from sheer desperation reached for the rule, and grabbing the master wrestled and struggled with him until they both fell and rolled in an ignominious heap on the floor, where they lay, Ike holding the master firmly until he promised not to strike him again.

Ike told his parents the entire story, withholding nothing of the facts and circumstances. The parents grieved at their son's rashness, yet could not find it in their hearts to administer to him further punishment.

The supervisor of schools soon called at the Gliddens' home. "I'm sorry to inform you, Mister Glidden," said the supervisor, "that we are compelled for the welfare of the other pupils to dismiss your boy from further attendance at school. Ike is a bright boy. As a scholar he is always in advance of his class. He has his lessons perfectly; but no one ever saw him study, and he is continually getting into mischief and distracting the attention of the school. We cannot permit him longer to attend. I sincerely hope," said the supervisor, "that your son will permit the master to pursue his vocation in peace hereafter, and also that you will not insist upon his attending school, otherwise I shall have him prosecuted for assault and battery."

Ike through all his humiliation and resentment wondered at the mildness of his father's manner under the

circumstances. He had never noticed how aged his father had grown, and now, as he looked into his kindly features, there came a sharp pang as of a premonition that his father would not be long with him to direct his conduct and spur him to better actions, and he inwardly resolved to make himself in the future such a man as any father might be proud to own.

And when his mother bade him good-night there were tears in the eyes that had watched so fondly for him and over him since infancy. Ike sank to sleep with a heaviness of heart such as he never previously experienced.

CHAPTER II.

TOM POTTLE'S FAILURE.

THE Gliddens lived in a comfortable farmhouse, surrounded by fields on which the generations of ancestors from the days of the earliest settlement had freely expended the strength and vigor of their lives only to find the wealth of the forests vanishing into nothingness and the once fertile plains becoming more stubborn and unproductive with each generation.

But they were honest and happy in their simple lives as the children came to make merry the old house on the hill. Joe Glidden was a synonym for honor and generosity throughout Central Vermont. Whatever he had he freely shared with the deserving poor, and many a man reduced to penury by adverse circumstances had been aided quietly by donations from his small store of funds. Some, when able, testified their gratitude by returning these loans, but others failed through various causes to do so, so that when the events related in the preceding pages transpired the Gliddens were in merely comfortable circumstances; their whole hope for the future centered in their boys and girls.

Early in the following morning, Ike wended his way to the field with a high resolve in his bosom that now his school days were ended he would be a man. He would live down the memories of his rude, boyish con-

duct. He would assume the burden of carrying on the farm, and this very day he would put that resolution into practice. He hitched up their span of horses and started out to plow. His father watched the proceedings in silence with a sense of great gladness in his heart. After watching Ike's maiden efforts with the plow he strode back to the house with the spring of youth in his step and whistling softly an old tune that he had not used for many years before.

"Why, Joe," said Mrs. Glidden cheerfully, "What's come over you? It does my heart good to hear you whistling as cheerfully as you did in the old days before the hard times came. "I'm glad to see that Ike's disgrace has not saddened you. I'm sure that Ike is not a bad boy, and I feel that he will make a man that will be a credit to us yet."

"You may well say that, Jennie," said Joe, "for Ike's gone down in the meadow and harnessed up Bismark and old Nell, and he's plowing there like a man of forty, holding and driving just as if it wasn't his first attempt, and he turns as neat a furrow as I ever see a man turn, too. I know that Ike's all right. He's a true Glidden. He's got the Glidden spirit and I do b'lieve this turn of affairs has brought the best in him to the surface. I must caution him against overdoin' himself at first, however.

"But bless me, if here ain't poor old Lucretia Oaks coming. I wonder what she wants?

"How d'yer do, Miss Oaks?"

"How do yer do, Mr. Glidden?—I come up ter see yer 'bout that young scamp o' yourn, that Ike, he's an

imp, that's what he is." Here Lucretia's feelings became too much for her powers of expression, and she broke into a sob.

Lucretia and her sister Mirandy were maiden ladies that occupied an old dilapidated house, and they were not infrequently the victims of harmless antics of mischievous boys and girls of that vicinity.

"I hope Ike has done you no injury," said Mr. Glidden. "I'm sure if he has done anything, it came from thoughtlessness, and not design."

"Thoughtlessness!" exclaimed Lucretia, whose speech suddenly returned to her. "Ef yer call it thoughtlessness for a grown young man like him to go ter work and raise ruckshuns night 'fore last with my ducks, and ter sozzle my broody hen what's a settin' on a nest o' eggs, with a pail o' water. An' then ter come an' rig one o' them plaguey tick-tacks on ther window o' two lone wimmen folks an' almost scat their wits out o' them, — then, why I don't know what 'tis ter be 'bused an' tormented by such bad boys as Ike is."

"No, 'twarnt him 'tall," said Mirandy, who had followed her sister and entered the house almost unobserved. "'Twas Dicky Jones, an' am sure 'twas."

"There, Randy, yer know 'tmust er been Ike, but 'cause he sometimes brings yer a lot 'o them old newspapers ter read, yer think he's a splendid boy. Don't yer know what 'Riah Jones said, when you blamed it on ter his Dicky? He wasn't afeared ter say that Ike Glidden was the worst boy he ever knew, and that there wasn't 'nother boy in town what 'ud be guilty o' cuttin' up sich capers on us but Joe Glidden's boy. Ike's a

villain. If I'd only a had him 'rrested, as Bill Cole told me ter do. I'd ——." But the vehemence of Lucretia's feelings again overcame her power of speech.

The Gliddens exchanged with each other glances of pain and mortification, because their son was being unjustly accused of conduct that they knew was not true.

"But Ike was away that afternoon, with the crowd, hunting for Jones' cow, and when he returned, staid at home during the remainder of the evening. Miss Oaks, I am positive that it was not my boy that annoyed you the night before last," said Mr. Glidden.

"Oh, yes," said Lucretia, "he was away bringin' back ther cow he driv off a purpose so'st you'd buy her at your own figger. I've heerd the talk round town, an' it don't look well on your part, Joe Glidden. Folks say as how Ike couldn't be much better, when his own father upheld him in his mischief. Well, yer can't make 'Riah Jones nor Bill Cole b'lieve 'twarn't Ike what nailed my poor ducks' feet to the floor, an' sozzled my settin' hen with water, an' hung ther tick-tack on my window."

"It's mighty strange, that no matter what mischief is done in these parts, it's always laid to my boy, whether he's been in the scrape or not. Everybody ready to condemn, and to give him a black mark. But then, Lucretia, I know that my boy was at home that evening, and is not the person who annoyed you," said Mr. Glidden.

"'Noyed me! 'twasn't half so bad fer me, as it was for the way he 'noyed ther poor ducks; you'd been mad yerself, Joe Glidden, if yer have any pity 'tall for a

lame duck. If yer went out in ther mornin' ter feed yer ducks, an' yer called 'em and they wouldn't come nigh nor a-near their feed, but ud look straight at yer, and go quack, quack, quack, and then yer'd find that they didn't come 'cause their feet was tacked to the floor with nails. Now, wouldn't you be mad, if Ike ud do that ter yer ducks?"

"Certainly, I would be very much provoked, if he should do such a thing. But it was not Ike that cut up the mischief this time, because he was at home with the rest of the family," said Mr. Glidden.

"That's so; I don't b'lieve Ike had anything ter do with the mischief ter our ducks," maintained Mirandy, who seemed to be very much displeased with her sister's denunciation of Mr. Glidden's son.

"'Twas Ike, an' yer needn't think yer a-goin ter keep him out o' ther scrape, sayin' that he was ter home an' abed. Mirandy, you silly thing, what are you a-stickin' up fer ther scamp fer, when every one sez 'twas Ike what did it?" said Lucretia.

A war of words ensued between the two, which ended by each starting off in opposite directions to air their grievances to the neighborhood.

Mrs. Glidden was in tears and Mr. Glidden's head was bowed with grief, for some time after the old ladies had departed, because their son's reputation was stigmatized through the evil reports of their neighbors.

"Well," said Mr. Glidden at length, "let us say nothing about it to Ike, so long as we know that he is not guilty. He's probably suffering enough now on account of the false things that have been said about

him in the past; he'll suffer enough for it anyway as time goes by."

"Good mornin', neighbor Cole."

"Good mornin', neighbor," said the newcomer as he entered. "I been down to the village and thought I'd drop in on my way home. Heerd a good deal 'bout Ike down there. Some folks thinks he's a dredful critter, but most of 'em says that Ike's all right. Hain't none of 'em but agrees he's a good-hearted, honest feller, but full of the mischief. Heerd Tom Pottle said t'other day he did b'lieve as how Ike was cut out fer a des'prado; but I told 'em I knew Ike, and he'd make a man better'n any their ancesters ever boasted of, and I knew the Gliddens, and they hadn't begun ter raise outlaws yit. As for Tom Pottle he comes pretty near bein' a jail-bird hisself. Hadn't been 't he left town 'tween two days he'd be good way on the road to the pen'tentiary now."

"What's the matter with Tom Pottle?" asked Mr. Glidden, sharply.

"Matter! Is it possible you hain't heerd? Why, Tom Pottle's business all went ter smash. He's sold everything he could lay his hands on and skipped. Stuck ther banks fer a lot, and nigh every farmer for ten miles round is bit more er less. Goin' to be hard times round this way mighty quick — Blessed God! what's the matter?"

Joe Glidden gave forth a hollow sound, — half cough, half groan, — and fell heavily back into his armchair.

They bore him unconscious to his bed and sent for Ike and Hiram and the girls.

They gathered around the couch on which lay the in-

animate form of him whose every thought and care and hope had been for their welfare, and grief so changed their young hearts that the fountains of their tears were choked and silently they watched and prayed for the return of reason and strength to that form so dear to them.

Tom Pottle owed him a sum of money, and had promised to pay the debt on the day following. Mr. Glidden had insisted upon receiving it without further delay, because he needed it to pay off the mortgage on his farm.

Mr. Pottle had promised so faithfully to pay the money at that particular time that there had been not even the slightest anxiety up to this time about being able to cancel the mortgage.

The shock of the terrible news of Pottle's financial distress, on the eve of the maturity of the mortgage, had on him this distressing effect. He revived somewhat only to burst into paroxysms of grief. He raved for hours about dreadful things that were to supervene to his home and property, and when utterly tired out by his own emotions he sank to sleep, to dream perhaps of more alarming delusions.

On awakening from his slumber, he was very much exhausted, and for a time lay motionless until he regained some strength, and then he asked his loving wife, who was nursing him with the utmost care and fidelity, about what he said during those uncertain periods in which all were terror and delirium to him. He continued in this brain-fagged and mentally-deranged condition for several weeks until affected by a slight cold,

which developed into dreadful pneumonia, and ultimately dragged him to the verge of the grave.

A slight moan from the sufferer betokened the effort of nature to reassert itself, and soon Joe Glidden opened his eyes from an unnatural sleep. In them was the peculiar brightness that comes to the eyes of those who have caught the dawn of an eternal day. One long gasp, and he was ushered into eternity.

The weeping wife folded her arms about the form of her dying husband. For a moment their lips met in one last token of affection. Ike bent over and kissed the withered cheek, and his eyes filled with tears.

CHAPTER III.

THE MORTGAGE ON THE FARM.

JOE GLIDDEN was laid at rest in the family lot, by the side of the loved ones who had preceded him. The family met in the living-room of the home, that seemed in its emptiness to throb with the weight of its loneliness. Ike's buoyant nature was the first to assert itself. "Let's not sit down here and mope," he said. "Father wouldn't want us to do this; we know that father's passed into happiness, and we know that we will add to his happiness by cheering up and tackling the difficulties that's before us. Mother, you'd better lie down and rest. A little sleep will do you a world of good."

"Oh, I'll take rest by and by, Ike. Your words have already cheered me, for I know now I've some one I can rely on; we'll begin now and make our plans. We'll all work together. Grace has got now so she can help me greatly about the house, in fact she's a better house-keeper now than many grown-up women," responded his mother.

"Yes," said Grace proudly, glad that in this awful trouble her capabilities were looked upon as a source of assistance, "and I will do all the housework, and you, dear mamma, will not have a care to bother you."

"And I," spoke up Maud, who was then twelve years

of age, "I'll help Grace, and I'm goin' to learn in a short time to be just as good a housekeeper as Grace. Ike and Hiram 'ill run the farm, and Grace and I'll run the house, and we'll elect you committee on the whole thing."

"We'll help Ike," said Hiram, "but the farm ain't b'g enough to work, and I'm going to get an education; Ike can't go to school any more, so he can stay and do the work, and I'm going to go away and become a doctor, and then I can take care of all of you."

Ike blushed at Hiram's awkward reference to his late disgrace, and the conversation lagged, but immediately Ike's cheerful nature predominated. "Well, mother," he said, "we've arranged the plans. Grace and Maud will run the inside of the house, Hiram's to be a doctor, and I'm going to be a bread-winner. Now, lie down and rest and we'll do up the chores."

This bit of encouragement by the children helped to soothe the pangs that surrounded Mrs. Glidden's heart when she was thinking of the struggle that was ahead of her. She lay down and slept but a short time, when she awoke much exhausted, thinking of the mortgage.

"Never mind about the mortgage, mother," said Ike, "I'll see the trustees of the bank and I know we'll get them to wait a little while longer."

"Fancy the officers of the bank listening to my boy, who has been so much slandered by almost everybody in the village," said the mother to herself; "I am afraid that the bank folks would not pay much attention to a boy of Ike's reputation."

Ike's undaunted courage asserted itself, and unknown

to his mother he called at the bank one day and had a long conference with the president in relation to the mortgage. Ike's positive manner, sincere words and faith in his efforts to discharge the mortgage, should the time for payment be lengthened, won for him the admiration of the president, who said, "Ike, I am delighted to see that you are endowed with a new spirit, and that you intend to be a better boy. I will grant your favor, and I trust that your behavior in the future will vindicate myself with the Board of Trustees for the reliance I place in you."

When Mrs. Glidden learned of the important session Ike had had with the official at the bank, it had a tendency to somewhat revivify her fortitude, but then they were dependent on their efforts to make the farm a paying institution. The problem of obtaining a livelihood, and the payment of a mortgage, was indeed a serious matter, and caused her many hours of anxiety.

Sweet are the uses of adversity. The family suddenly deprived of its sole protection, is as suddenly fortified by the very stress of the calamity that has befallen it, and in a twinkling, dependent youth gives way to independent action and energy. Ike realized that fortune had been good enough to provide him with an old farm, plenty of grit and good health, so he resolved to do his best to support the family and save the home. He entered upon his part of the farm management with a determination to furnish the home with an abundance of such provisions as could be produced by constant toil and industry on such a farm as they possessed. He surprised his neighbors by his diligence. His crops com-

pared favorably with theirs. He obtained as many premiums on his colts and cattle at the annual fair as any other, and friends remarked that the widow Glidden seemed to be getting on pretty well.

While the mortgage was not paid as rapidly as Ike's boyish plans had fancied, yet small amounts were occasionally tendered the bank, and the amount of the principal was being gradually reduced. The bank president was fully satisfied with the confidence he had placed in Ike, and the Board of Trustees was content to depend upon the young man's ability to make a final payment within a short time.

Ike was endowed with the sterling qualities of energy and ambition, and was bent on owning as good a team as any of their neighbors. "Need better horse to mate Bismark," he said one day while the family were seated at the table, "ought ter have one ter get in these crops."

Old Nell, their farm horse, had become utterly useless for the plow and equally unfit for the road. Ike insisted upon the immediate need of a more suitable horse. The family debated in full council what they could most conveniently sell, or, more properly speaking, what were the easiest methods of making money with which to purchase a mate for noble Bismark. The deliberation was soon finished, and upon Ike's suggestion it was thereupon resolved that he should exchange their three-year-old colt for a suitable horse, and if necessary pay a difference, but not to exceed the sum of twenty dollars.

The next morning he started for Montpelier with Bismark harnessed in the old farm wagon and the colt

leading behind on a halter. To Ike's youthful mind the vocation of the horse-jockey was one of dignity; he had even admired the qualities and clever appearances of the traders he had seen at the county fairs. He entertained no doubt as to his ability to make a satisfactory change, and felt that it was an excellent opportunity to establish his reputation in the community as a good judge of horses, and even pictured to himself the joyful surprise of the family upon his triumphal return with a good horse. While he was possessed of an unusual amount of native shrewdness, this trading expedition evidently cut his eyetooth. When about half way into Montpelier he overtook a traveler and invited him to ride. The man cheerfully accepted the invitation and took a seat in the wagon. "Pretty good-looking colt you've got there; how old is he?" said the stranger. "He's the best three-year-old in this country," said Ike, "and I b'lieve some day he'll be a trotter."

"Good-looking colt, good-looking colt," said Ike's companion. "Looks es if he had speed; shouldn't wonder if he'd be a fast one some day."

Ike clucked to Bismark, who responded immediately, and they were speeding over the ground at a very commendable rate when Ike remarked, "Just see how the colt follows up, watch his free and easy action, and wide-open gate. That colt's a clinker an' I oughten ter let him go, but then I can't help it."

"Had a hoss that was kind o' speedy myself, few days ago; he was a pretty good all round kind of a hoss; ought ter been satisfied with him, but I warn't some way t'other. Went up ter ride round ther square

and had my eyes peeled ter see what I could see, and run across a fellow what had a pacer, pretty good built one, looked sound and smooth; 'bout time I saw this fellow, he got his eye on mine; 'llowed his hoss ud beat mine 'n half mile brush. I 'llowed he couldn't, an' put up ten ter back it. We got underway; we had jest the prettiest race you ever see, down that half-mile stretch, and my hoss won by jest a neck. I got pretty good idee 'bout drivin' a hoss myself; and I jedged some way, from peculiar way that feller held on ter ther ribbons that he didn't know as much 'bout drivin' as he ought to. Think, says I, good handlin' that hoss ud beat mine, but he don't know it, and I 'llowed I wuz goin' ter have a trade before I left that town, but didn't show my hand. Bime-by he struck me for a trade; but I played shy, didn't seem to care to want his hoss; 'llowed there wuzn't better hoss 'n mine anywhere. Pretty soon he got round ter say he'd trade even. We shifted, and I couldn't get the harness off'n my horse and on to his'n quick enough ter suit me. We got all hitched up agin, and that fellow he says to me, 'Bet you twenty dollars I'll beat you back.' I took him quicker'n scat; then I diskivered why he held the ribbons so queer. When I chucked ter my hoss ter go he jest riz the dasher off'n my wagon the fust clip. Next he made smash o' the body; laid down on the shafts. I got him upon his feet, and he got jest near 'nough to what was left of it to kick it inter kindlin' wood, then he struck piece o' the broken shaft hangin' ter the breechin' strop. Every time he raised, that shaft struck him a clip; the last time I see him he was

goin' towards the State line. I chased the hoss a ways until he got out o' sight; then I turned back to see the fellow what I got him from, to see if he'd give me back just money 'nough to get out o' town with; but heard he'd got out o' town in a hurry, and couldn't find where he'd gone. Tell yer what, this hoss-tradin' is wusner 'n marriage; if yer hit right you're all right and hunky, but if yer hit wrong why there yer be. Been tryin' ter git home; got ter git home somehow, and 've walked all ther way here. Gosh, I wish I had that harness," and the traveler heaved a deep sigh, that told of a heart bowed down by weight of woe.

"Couldn't catch me so easy, I'll bet yer," said Ike with a feeling of pity for the unsophisticated victim. "You must be a new beginner."

"Wall, not exactly a beginner," said the stranger, "but I'm new to a good many things about hosses yet. Ever trade yerself?" suddenly asked he.

Ike reluctantly admitted his inexperience, and then in a burst of confidence told the stranger of his object in going to town.

"Good," said the stranger, "I'll help ye out. I know hosses from A to Z, and I'll put ye on to an easy mark in half an hour after we git there. You jist leave things ter me. I'll lay the bait and you pull in the fish."

They drove into the market-place, and Ike put up at a farmer's resort and had a lunch. He had little appetite, however. This day seemed to him the proudest of his life. He was no longer a boy in his own estimation, but a man, — a full-fledged, independent

and responsible man of business. How he would delight his mother with the proofs of his business capacity on his return. The stranger's story excited his sympathy for the victim, but his self-confidence could not admit of a thought that he could be fooled in a horse trade. Hadn't he known horses all his life, and hadn't he studied the arts and graces of the few professional "horsemen" that had come within his observation since infancy.

When the stranger had reached the market-place he parted with Ike, saying that he would look around a bit and do his best to get on to the lay of the land for Ike's benefit.

"You and me is strangers," he said, "so I can prepare 'em fer a dicker with you without excitin' suspicion. I'll be back pretty soon, and perhaps bring with me somebody who wants ter trade. Lots o' farmers in to-day, and if I can git one of 'em who is inclined to do some swapping we're most likely to land you on to a good fat swap."

The stranger wandered carelessly among the stalls and blacksmith shops that lined the square, and was greeted pleasantly by the numerous men loitering about the place. He at last drew near to a little crowd of men gathered on the platform of the hay scales, and here his welcome was most cordial.

"Hullo Rankin! how's tricks?" said one.

"Jest tolable, jest tolable," answered Rankin.

"Find anything suited ye up country?" asked another.

"May be so, may be so," was the non-committal reply.

"Funny notion that o' yours, Rankin," said this interrogator, "goin' out on foot to size up the country as it were. All your folks down in Maine do it that way?"

"No, not all," said Rankin, "but it's fine exercise for the legs and wind, and a feller makes good use of his eyes and ears."

Then the two drew to one side and entered into conversation in an undertone, in which the story of the race and the exchange in Burlington was retold with only a slight variation, showing that it was Rankin who had got rid of the kicking horse and a stranger from York State had lost wagon, horse, harness and cash.

The pair laughed uproariously, and Rankin counted over some money to the other.

"What'd you see on your way in?" asked Rankin's companion.

"Best thing I see was a young feller who picked me up this side the hill-side farm driving a horse I'd had my eye on since I fust see him. I diskivered that young feller was inclined to dicker and told him I'd help him out. — Where's Hericks feeding?"

"In the stable. Why?"

"You jest go fix him up — hitch him to your new trap and drive round ter Bill Hudson's blacksmith shop, and I'll be there with the youngster."

Rankin then rejoined Ike, and with a glad smile assured him that fortune was smiling on their efforts. "There'll be a man 'round here in a few minutes with the prettiest animal I ever see. Only thing he has against him 's his color; says he can't bear buckskin.

I told him 'bout yours, and shouldn't wonder if you'd make a good dieker."

Just then the man drove up, and indeed the animal he drove was a beauty with noble eyes and beautifully arched neck, and as it stepped jauntily along Ike was fairly carried away with its looks.

"How'll yer trade, sonny?" said the jockey.

"Don't know; how do you want me ter trade?" inquired Ike.

"Give me fifty and the colt, and you may have the buckskin," responded the jockey.

"No, I won't pay fifty dollars," said Ike, "but I'll give you an even twenty, and if you don't care to accept, the trade is off."

"I'll do it," declared the jockey.

Ike's heart was full of gratitude to the stranger, who had shown him the way to get a horse worth two of his own, and the trade was quickly consummated.

Ike drove off in high glee, the stranger admonishing him to drive easy for a day or two, as the horse was just in from pasture and too soft for heavy driving at once.

Then Rankin and the colt's new owner went back to the stable and indulged in merriment like men intoxicated.

CHAPTER IV.

IKE'S HORSE TRADE.

IKE drove leisurely home in the sunlight of the early afternoon, his spirits light as the fleecy clouds that cast evanescent shadows across the verdant glory of the Vermont hills. No words can express the honest pride and exultation that moved him as he turned his new acquisition into his mother's dooryard.

His mother was there to greet him, and all of the family viewed with surprise and astonishment the horse he drove. They were loud in their praises of Ike's good fortune, but the mother's heart could not accept the apparent good fortune without some apprehension.

Ike was putting the animal through his paces before the admiring eyes of his brother and sisters when some of his neighbors came along to learn what was going on at Glidden's farm.

Uriah Jones observed that the degenerated animal Ike brought home had a spavin. Another said he had a wind-gall; another convinced the bystanders that he was blind of one eye, while old man Cole declared that he would wager a dollar that the horse would not work.

Ike listened good-naturedly to all that was said, until they attempted to slander his new horse by accusing him of being baulky. "He's not a baulky horse," stoutly

declared Ike; "I drove him all the way from town, and he's as willing and steady as any horse you ever saw."

It was the old man Cole who again turned the sunshine to gloom by a positive assertion that it was none other than the Jack Fisher baulky horse.

"I don't b'lieve he's the Jack Fisher horse," said Ike.

"Mebbe not, mebbe not," said the old man Cole, somewhat sarcastically, "but you jest hitch him to that stone-drag and see if he'll haul."

Ike, bursting with wrath at the insinuations, unhitched the horse from the wagon, and said to his younger brother, "Hi, bring out the spreader and traces, and I'll show these fellows how little they know about my property."

Having harnessed the horse, they attached him to a stone-drag and four of the men stood on it, and waited to see if he would haul them. Ike pulled on the reins and ordered the horse to go, but it was of no use; persistency, persuasion and effort were without avail; the horse was truly baulky, and evidently not worth a ten-cent piece. With the colt and twenty dollars gone, and all the neighbors laughing about his trade, Ike found himself in rather a mortifying predicament. While the experiment of trying the new horse was being carried on, Mrs. Glidden and Grace stood anxiously looking through the window, and when the supper hour arrived and the neighbors departed, Ike and Hiram went into the house. While Mrs. Glidden and Grace were grieved at the misfortune of being swindled out of a three-year-old colt, they were more sorrowful for Ike, for they knew he felt sore at heart on account of his misadventure.

During supper no reference was made to the new horse, and when the meal was over, Ike immediately retired to his chamber, undoubtedly with an aching head and heart. He lay down upon his bed and gave up to the grief and disappointment that raged within him. Not even when his father died did the pitifulness of the family and his own condition appeal to him so keenly. After a while he mastered his grief and returned to the sitting-room. The other members of the family tried to be cheerful, and to act as though there was nothing to cause sadness among them. Ike, however, was too full of disappointment and humiliation to join in the conversation with any degree of pleasure, and finally retired for the night.

He was awake early next morning with renewed courage, and asked Hiram to assist him to start off before any of the neighbors were up. As Ike was uncertain when he left the house whither he might go, Hiram was unable to give his mother and sister much more information than that he (Ike) should not return until he had a desirable horse in his possession. The anxiety of the family during the day and particularly during the evening could be perceived in their muteness and lack of social conversation, and while they had always practised the habit of retiring quite early, they sat up until nearly midnight, expecting every moment to hear hoof sounds coming along their driveway. Finally they retired, and Mrs. Glidden vainly tried to sleep. The next day the same spirit dominated each of them. It was a new experience. Ike away from home and his whereabouts unknown to them!

Just after they had seated themselves at the dinner table, sounds were heard of a team coming up the driveway with great speed, and before they could reach the door and see who it might be, the familiar sound of Ike's voice was heard in his usual gleeful and loud "Hullo, hullo! whoa, whoa, Jim!" When they rushed out to meet him they saw one of the finest looking horses in the whole neighborhood, and one that proved to be an excellent worker and a perfect mate for Bismark. It was indeed a happy family that sat at the dinner table that day listening to the story of Ike's experience.

He explained his early departure and unexpected trip from home; how crest-fallen he was when he found that he had exchanged the colt for such a worthless horse; how he resolved, after he went to bed that night, to start out the next morning on a horse-trading expedition, and not to return home until he obtained such a horse as was needed on the farm. How after trading twice he fell in with the same band of horse-jockeys that cheated him out of the colt, and how it was from that identical crowd he obtained the last horse which he brought home.

"Hi," said Ike after they had finished dinner, "you go tell them fellows that were here laughing the day before yesterday to come and pick flaws in this trade."

Hiram accordingly extended Ike's invitation. When they came and examined the new horse, one said, "He's a noble animal;" another said, "You've made a good trade this time;" and another said, "Ike, you're a brick." Ike was then willing to challenge the old man

Cole or any of the neighbors that his team would drive or work better than any other pair of horses in the town.

At this time Hiram was able to assist in many of the details about the farm, and Grace was always ready to help her mother, and everything had an air of prosperity.

Ike was imbued with a spirit of adventure and a desire to test the opportunities afforded in this world for an active young man, and after due deliberation decided to leave home as soon as he could arrange to do so. He continued to manage the farm until he was twenty-one, and then told his mother of his plans and intentions, and reminded her that Hiram was now the same age that he was when he took charge of his father's affairs, and that the family had now reached that state at which they could dispense with his assistance. All the family made strenuous objections; but Ike was of a very positive disposition, aggressive, and relentless in carrying out his plans; and regardless of protestations, one day packed his trunk and set out for Providence, R. I.

CHAPTER V.

IKE GOES TO MAINE.

WHEN Ike arrived in Providence he was quite unpolished in manner, yet his rough and ready appearance seemed to indicate great energy and a deal of industry and determination. After some efforts he secured a position as coachman with a wealthy lawyer named Burgess.

Ike was soon recognized by Mr. Burgess as a bright young man, likely to be faithful, and who gave evidence of more intellect than is usually found in one of his peculiar appearance.

So one morning he said, "Glidden, could you collect rents?" Ike was somewhat surprised, but with his usual assurance replied, "Yes, sir; I think I could." "Can you read and write?" "Well, Mr. Burgess, I am not a master of the art of writing, but I think I could write a rent receipt, if that would be sufficient." "Very well, I need you at my office, and I will engage a man to fill your position as coachman."

Ike accordingly went to the office, and was assigned a small table in a corner at the desk that had been used by the former rent collector of Mr. Burgess. He was instructed as to his duties, and equipped with a file of receipt blanks and a list of delinquent tenants.

Mr. Burgess enjoyed an extensive law practice, be-

sides being trustee of many large estates. Among these was the estate of Jonathan Wiggins, consisting of immense mining properties and cattle ranches in the West. The ownership of this vast estate had for years been in litigation by reason of so many different claimants, yet the legal heir had not been found.

Mr. Burgess had occasion to be absent from home frequently, while looking after the interests of the Wiggins estate and had in his employ a young lawyer named Alfred Marks, to whom he intrusted the care and management of his office during his absence in the West. Marks was a man of considerable ability, of inflexible integrity and much beloved by his acquaintances, but he had one common fault. His sociability led him, in spite of his judgment, into frequent excesses of drink. Ike's amiable disposition and originality soon won for him the esteem of Marks, who also admired Ike's peculiar aptness for grappling with questions on important matters.

While Mr. Burgess was in the West Marks usually had some clients of his own, but it seemed they were principally of the criminal class. Ike noticed that among them were some peculiar characters. One day a man of ministerial mien called on Marks, and Ike took the liberty to ask who the distinguished-looking man might be. Marks replied, "Glidden, confidentially speaking that is one of the greatest crooks in the country. He has employed me to defend his pal, who is charged with burglary."

Mr. Burgess remained away from fall until spring, and during that time it often happened that Marks was

dissipating, leaving to Ike the care of the office, and the duty of saying to each of the numerous callers, "Mr. Marks is out of town to-day on business of importance." During the hours in which Ike was alone at the office Rastus, the colored janitor of the building, became an habitual caller and frequently entertained him by expressing in his characteristic manner his ideas of public matters.

One day after Rastus had finished a harangue on the trust problem, Ike, who had hardly heard Rastus, said almost unconsciously, "Since I've been in this office I've acquired an ambition to be a lawyer. I have an excellent opportunity here to study; Marks has given me great encouragement. I have made three or four attempts to study; but it seems utterly impossible for me to apply myself long enough to learn anything, so I have been obliged to abandon the hope altogether."

"Dat's w'ere yo're right," said Rastus, "de law am a great perfvession, but w'at yo want to study fo? You am on'y wastin' yo time, chile. De law is like de human fambly. I don't tink it any use to wase time studin' books to learn human natur', an' it am de same wid de law."

"Don't you think it is necessary to study books in order to learn the law?" said Ike.

"It ain't in de books. I say law is like human natur'; it's in de man," responded Rastus.

"Why, Rastus, what do you mean? I do not understand you."

"I mean dat if a man is smaht he can be smaht 'nuff lawyer if he doan read no law books," answered Rastus.

“That may be true ; but it is of course necessary to study the science of the law in order to practise it,” said Ike.

“No, sir, dat ain’ so ; de mo he study de less he know about de conundrum and dat’s wat de law am, jess de same as de client wat wants de law. You’ll allus find he’s a conundrum or he wouldn’t be wantin’ ter git inter law. You see when a man comes here to git inter law, yer can’t keep him out ’cause he’s bound ter git in. Show me any pusson what wants de law, an’ I’ll show yer a conundrum, ’cause he’s a mystery even ter de lawyer what takes de case.”

“Rastus, it seems to me your notions are rather peculiar.”

“I once heard a great lawyer say dat de ‘Statue quo of de law was de perfecshun ob reason’ ; dat is, a man what’s got de good reason am a good lawyer whedder he ebber read de books on law or not.”

“Well, did you agree with him, Rastus?”

“Yes, sir. Dis law bizness am a great mystry to mos’ people, an’ de human fambly is ’bout de same wherebber it am found. It hab always been so, and I reckon always will be. Dar yo see, mystry, flosophy and de human fambly am ’bout de same, and so am de law. Books doan make de lawyer ; I tell yo it am de man, and ef yo goin’ to study you should study de man.”

“Why do you think so?”

“Because de books doan tell yo how to get de coin ; ef yo know how to size a man up, dat’s all yo want.”

“Oh, I think there are other matters to be considered

in a lawyer's success beside that of the amount of money he receives," said Ike.

Just then a call for Rastus from the elevator man prevented him from completing his exposition on the study of law.

Ike had heard him talk on so many subjects in about the same way that he was not so much amused at his sayings as when he first entered the employ of Mr. Burgess.

This conversation with Rastus, however ridiculous it might have been, evidently had a tendency to encourage Ike that possibly he might some time practise law as successfully as many lawyers, notwithstanding his inability to persevere in study. The knowledge he had acquired from observation since coming to that office might certainly prove a valuable resource in the conduct of almost any business, added to which he was continually gaining a greater knowledge of human nature. Frequently he thought that there might be a time when he would be competent to conduct an office of his own.

After Mr. Burgess returned from the West in the spring he decided to add another pair of driving horses to his already well-equipped stables, and had become particularly interested in a pair of Maine-bred horses that had been highly recommended to him.

Knowing that Ike was somewhat familiar with horses and their respective value, he said to him, "Mr. Glidden, there's a pair of horses down in Maine that I think may suit me, and I want you to go down there and look them over. Here is a hundred dollars to cover expenses, and the name and residence of the owner of them.

Take the Pullman this evening, go down and examine them, and if you think they would suit me, buy them at as low a price as possible, and give the owner a draft on me for the amount."

Ike accordingly took the train that evening, and proceeded to the town where the owner of the horses resided and purchased them at a price that he considered reasonable.

While on his trip to Maine an advertisement in a newspaper attracted his attention, which read as follows:

WANTED: — A lawyer to locate in this town. Excellent chance for a good collector. For further information enclose stamp. Address P. O., Box XYZ, Blueberry Falls, Me.

"Here's my chance," said Ike as he read this peculiar notice. "I think I answer all the requirements of that advertisement even if I have not studied the law. I have a notion to go down there, and give the business a trial. Rastus said that it was not necessary to study law in order to practise it successfully, and I've begun to think that he's about right, and that as long as a fellow's got some good horse sense, can appear wise and take time to look up cases after the business comes to him, he can win out in the law business. Blamed if I don't go down there soon as I ship these horses, and look that place over."

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW LAWYER.

WHEN Ike arranged matters pertaining to the shipment of the horses he had purchased, he started for Blueberry Falls "for further information" about the place in which a lawyer was really "wanted." The railway through that section of Maine was only under process of construction, and it was necessary to travel a greater part of the journey by horse and carriage over rough roads. He made frequent attempts to obtain some information from the driver, a young chap named Zeke Kirk, about the place and people of the village to which he was going. But Zeke's knowledge consisted merely of a familiarity with the horse fraternity, the spavins and wind-galls of the different horses owned in that section, and a slight acquaintance with the young ladies of the village who attended the country dances. The business interests of the place had not sufficiently impressed his memory to enable him to give Ike the desired information, except that "There is two blueberry factories, an ole tumbled-down saw mill by the bridge, and a man what keeps a store named Ansel Hicks."

It was late in the evening when they reached their destination. On their arrival at the hotel the landlord came out and courteously greeted them, and after Ike

entered the house, and became seated at the table and was served with an excellent supper for which this favorite hostelry is so well known, he remarked to himself, "Well, this is a gem of a hotel, and I hope I'll find the rest of the town as satisfactory." At an early hour he sought rest from the fatigue of travel, and waited for morning and daylight for an observation of the village. He arose early next morning and went out for a stroll. The first object that attracted his attention was an old man sweeping off the platform of a store over the door of which was the sign "A. Hicks." As he passed the store he was kindly saluted with "How'd do? Up prutty early, ain't yer? What kind of goods be yer a-sellin'?" Ike informed him that he was not a commercial salesman, and that he was simply taking an early stroll around town just to see the place. Then the old gentleman pompously apprised Ike that he was proprietor of that store, and had been doing business there in that same building for more than forty years. Ike in response said, "Well, then you must be Mr. Ansel Hicks; I think I have heard of you before."

Ansel somewhat alarmed (for he suspected that Ike was a representative of one of his Boston creditors) said, "Where in the world did you ever hear of me before?"

"Why, you being a business man here, it is not uncommon to hear mention of your name in business houses."

"Well, sir, be you from Boston? P'raps you're down here, a-tryin' to start up the brickyard."

"Oh, no," said Ike nonehalantly.

"Suppose, then, you're a-goin' up river a-fishin' for some trout before you go back?"

"No, I think all the trout I catch while here, if any, will be in the village," said Ike, whose mind at this particular period of his life was running on more serious things than pleasure trips.

"What business do you follow, sir?" said Ansel, unconscious of the question he was really asking the stranger.

To this seeming intrusiveness Ike responded with a dignified manner, "I am a lawyer."

At this startling announcement Ansel almost had a series of shocks, for he made up his mind for a certainty that, if this apparently mysterious stranger was a lawyer, he had been sent by his Boston creditors to close his store; after a lapse of a few minutes his nerves seemed to steady down somewhat and he said, "Well, if I'd get in some of what's owin' ter me, I'd be all right."

"Then you undoubtedly have some overdue accounts on your books, that should be turned over to some one for collection," said Ike in a sort of soliciting manner.

"Yes," said Ansel, "but yer know if I want ter trustee any one I have ter send ter Deblois, and by the time the writ gets here, the feller is got his pay, and there is nothin' left fer me. I thought maybe there might be some young lawyer willin' ter come and locate here for what little business we might work up for him and I advertised fer one, and as yet haven't hearn from any. Think I'd be all right if I only had a lawyer here to help me get picked up, and straightened out."

"I saw your advertisement," said Ike, "I decided to

come and investigate for myself, rather than to write for information, and perhaps be the victim of a joke. So the advertisement is all straight, and you are the man who caused it to be inserted?"

The demeanor of Ike, his quasi-omniscient air, and earnestness in the last interrogative, seemed to alarm Ansel a little more. The latter thought, perhaps he had done something wrong by causing such an advertisement to be published, and was liable to prosecution for it, and he was so apprehensive of trouble of some kind that he was puzzled over the situation, but answered, "Yes, I'm the man."

"Well, sir, if you think there is a chance for a young lawyer to make a living I would like to know it," said Ike.

"Well," hesitatingly and nervously replied Ansel, "you're sure you're not down here for any mischief, and got some bills agin me from those Boston fellers?"

"No, why, no indeed, Mr. Hicks; I am here to locate, to open a law office and to assist you and every other person in the vicinity that may desire my services," said Ike.

"Come in; why didn't yer tell me when yer first cum down the street what yer cum fer? I was a little mistrustful of you, and thought from appearances perhaps you might be somebody else. What I tell yer, mind, is between me and you; if you will stay here I will give you more bills than you can collect in a whole year," said Ansel.

Ike replied, "I thank you for your extreme kindness in offering me so much business; perhaps there may be a few that I could not collect in two years, if at all;

however, I shall do the best I can to recover your money from your debtors, and would thank you if you would kindly suggest where there is a vacant room suitable for an office."

"I belong to ther church, and yer can have the vestry of the meetin'-house until Ame Blibbers moves his carpenter bench out from the room over the blacksmith shop across the way. My wife's father owned the building; I'm a widerer now, but have charge of the buildin' jest ther same, and I'll put Ame out of it to-day, because he hain't paid no rent for more than five year," determinedly said Ansel. "Thank you," answered Ike; "I notice by the town clock that it is five minutes of seven, and think I will return to the hotel for breakfast, and will see you later in the day."

As Ike was leaving a man drove up in front of the store, and remaining in his wagon called out, "Anse, bring me a piece of terbacker," which command Ansel promptly obeyed. Then Ike heard the man in the wagon ask Ansel, "Who's that air proud-steppin' feller what jest cum out of here? Cal'late he must be one of them gov'ment pension detectifs."

"Oh no, proudly said Ansel, "that is the new lawyer."

"Ther what?" said the man in the wagon, in an amazed tone, "Why he'll be a-suin' ther hull o' us."

And just as Ike was turning into the hotel yard he heard the voice of the storekeeper from across the street say, "Who did you say 'twas, Anse?" and he naturally paused to hear the answer, when Anse responded in quite a loud tone, "The New Lawyer."

CHAPTER VII.

HIS FIRST CASE.

BLUEBERRY FALLS, the most important village on Snake River, has the distinction of being the center of the blueberry industry. It is situated in the lower end of a valley, which extends for many miles along the course of the river. A few miles from the village the valley widens, and stretches out over a vast plain, where blueberries grow in abundance.

After breakfast Ike strolled through the village, and spent the day in cultivating the acquaintance of residents of the place. He secured, in a good location, a pleasant room for an office, and one of the merchants kindly volunteered to loan him a large old-fashioned desk, which was gladly accepted; another sent him two odd chairs, and Ansel Hicks sent him a copy of the Revised Statutes of the edition of 1857.

The next morning found Ike established in an office, ready for the practice of law, and wondering what the nature of his first case might be.

He began to meditate on the mockery of his attempting to administer the edicts of law to people in quest of a legalized track to pursue in preserving their rights. He reflected on the audacious course his ambition had led him to adopt. "But then, I've posed as a lawyer to Ansel, and why can't I be just as successful with the others," he

said to himself. "I'm here, and I am not going to weaken for want of assurance. I'll try the experiment before I surrender my inclination to be a lawyer. I've got ten times as much good judgment as Marks, and why can't I get along all right. There, I must write to Mr. Burgess and get the letter in the next mail before I forget it."

He wrote in an off-hand style, the following composition: —

BLUEBERRY FALLS, MAINE, ———.

HON. HENRY BURGESS, Providence, R. I.

Dear Mr. Burgess: I hereby tender my resignation as one of your employees. The horses were shipped to Providence on the day I sent you the telegram. I gave the parties a draft on you for the purchase price of the horses. There was a balance of \$40 left of the \$100 you gave me when leaving, after my traveling expenses were paid, and that nearly pays two weeks' salary due me.

I am in business here for myself. Please have Rastus send my trunk to me, and oblige

Your obedient servant,

ISAAC GLIDDEN.

About the time he finished the letter resigning his situation with Mr. Burgess, the door of his office opened quietly, and there appeared before his bewildered vision a picture of youth and beauty that made his heart leap. She was a girl of perhaps sixteen summers, and with a great deal of embarrassment he waited for her to make her business known to him. The maiden stood alone, with eyes downcast, as if gathering courage to speak. At length she spoke, and he listened in rapturous expectancy to hear what cause demanded his championship

for such a fair client. "I've got a dreadful bad tooth," she said, "an' Ma said it ought to be pulled." Pointing to the offending molar, she continued, "It's right here."

Ike for a moment was transfixed with astonishment. He had not expected that his first case would require such a broad and comprehensive knowledge of the law, but his old self-assurance returned to him immediately. "Please be seated," he said, "and I'll twitch that out in a jiffy."

He made straight for the room opposite, occupied by a shoemaker, borrowed a pair of pincers, and returned to his office. The girl shut her eyes, and opened her mouth. With a firm and steady grip Ike placed the pincers on the aching tooth, and with a quick wrench of the hand, removed it from the socket. So deftly was it done that the young lady had scarcely time to utter the scream of pain against which she had been fortifying herself. "There you are, Miss," Ike said as he passed her a glass of water. "I hope all your troubles will pass away as easily as this one did. Never mind your change," said Ike, smiling, "It's my first law case, and I will celebrate it by not taking a fee."

"Ain't you a dentist?" asked the girl.

"Oh, no," said Ike, "I am a lawyer," and they both laughed merrily at the joke. After the girl had gone, Ike opened the door, and tore down the dentist sign that had been a useless ornament to the door of the office since the village dentist removed from town. But through all that day, and for many days thereafter, the pleasant face of his first client haunted him.

Shortly after the tooth-pulling episode, voices and foot-

steps were heard, indicating the arrival of other possible clients, and Ike quivered as he tried to form an idea of what his next case might be.

"Well, sir, here you be," was heard, and Ansel Hicks appeared in the doorway, preceding another man, apparently of the same age, whom Ansel introduced as Deacon Squirm, a brother-in-law, and explained that his wife was the only sister of the deacon.

Ansel, evidently with a desire to impress the lawyer with his important position as a business man, commenced in a slow and drawling manner to relate some of the details of the large business he had carried on there in days gone by.

Ike, perhaps a little impatient to know the object of their call and taking it for granted that Mr. Hicks was somewhat slow in arriving at the real issue, suddenly said, "What can I do for you, gentlemen?"

"Oh, well, yer know the deacon and me owns some land, side by side, a thousand acre in each lot, an' I'm a-goin, ter sell mine ter ther deacon and I want a deed made," said Ansel.

"All right, sir, what is the description of the land you wish to convey? have you any documents for reference in order to fix the butts and bounds?" and Ike mentally struggled with the sickening fear that his knowledge of conveyancing would be insufficient to meet the requirements.

"It's a tract of blueberry land in township IXI., that Samuel Squirm, the deacon's father, originally owned, and there wuz two thousand acre in ther block at fust, and when he died yer see, it then went ter ther deacon an' my wife, 'cause they wuz the only children."



"WELL SIR, HERE YOU BE?" WAS HEARD, AND ANSEL HICKS APPEARED IN THE
DOORWAY, PRECEDING ANOTHER MAN

"Yes, I understand; then, after the old gentleman died, your wife and deacon Squirm were the only heirs," said Ike.

"Yes, sir, that's the way o' it," the deacon affirmed.

Ansel explained that he owned the east half of the two-thousand-acre block, and the deacon owned the west half, and that he was afraid his creditors would seize it, so he had decided to sell it to the deacon, even at a small price.

Ike asked Ansel how he acquired title to it, and the answer was, "Why, bless yer life, my wife is now dead this ten year, an' I take her part, don't I?"

"Well, there may be some question about that, as I understand you to say you have a son, and he is, of course, the real heir to your wife's estate, subject to your right of dower; and as this blueberry land seems to me to be characterized as wild land I do not think that you even have any dower interest in the thousand acres you refer to."

"What kind o' law is that? Do you say I don't own that thousand acres?" indignantly inquired Ansel.

"Well, Mr. Hicks, suppose you do own the east half, and deacon Squirm owns the west half, when was it divided?"

"The summer after the old gentleman died, and that wuz eleven year ago," answered the deacon.

"Who has the papers that were passed at the time the division was made? Have you brought any of them with you?" inquired Ike.

"Yes," said Ansel, pulling from his pocket a torn fragment of what apparently had been a legal document, and

handing to Ike what had been a part of a deed, continued, "Here is mine."

"Yes, Mr. Hicks, but when it was divided, and a line run; you gave the deacon a deed of release of all on the west side of that line, and he gave you a similar deed of all on the east side, and I mean the deed from the deacon to you?"

"Bless yer life! ain't I give yer ther title of me an' my wife ter it, ther deacon an' me an' Bob Hunt, the surveyor, went up an' run the line off an' set up stakes, 'tween the east half an' the west half, an' I said ter ther deacon "take yer choice," and he tuk ther west half, and I tuk the east side fer Lucy Ann, my wife. And then when she died, her part cum ter me, yer see, 'cause I'm her widerer."

"Were not any writings, papers or new deeds made out at the time the land was divided?"

"No, sir, what was the good of any new deed? wusn't the old one good enough?"

"Yes, Mr. Hicks, I understand that about the survey, the stakes, the dividing line, and about the occupancy since then of the east and west parts of the land; but wasn't there any transfer of deeds at the time, as proof or evidence that a division of the land was made?"

"Yes, of course there was; ain't I alreddy given you my part of ther deed? when we divided ther land we divided ther deed in two, and when the deacon chose ther west half of the land, of course he took the left-hand half of the deed, and I took the right-hand half of the deed because I was to have the east side of the land."

"Oh, I see, Mr. Hicks, you divided the land by cut-

ting the deed into equal parts, and you took one and the deacon the other," laughingly replied Ike.

"Yes, and that piece of the deed in your hand is my part of the land," nervously said Ansel. Ike did not know how to make a deed, but was bound not to acknowledge his deficiency, and said, —

"I see ; I'll fix you all right in a minute, hold up your right hand, Mr. Hicks ; now, Mr. Hicks, you repeat after me, —

" ' Know all men by these presents that I, Ansel Hicks, dealer in hardware and general groceries in Blueberry Falls, do solemnly on my oath pronounce, declare, give, bargain, sell and convey, give over and forever give up to Jonathan Squirm this half of the lot of land in Township IXL that was given to me by Samuel Squirm after he died when he give it to my wife, and she give it to me, because I'm her widerer, so help me God.' "

When Ansel had finished the proclamation Ike said, "Now, Mr. Hicks, we'll place a big seal on this paper and you pass it to Deacon Squirm, an' that makes it all right."

The paper was passed, and three sighs of relief made the walls of the room echo in the office, and Ike's sigh expressed the most satisfaction.

When they reached the street they were loud in their praises of the legal knowledge and sagacity of the new lawyer.

Ike's next client came to secure his services in the defence of a friend who was charged with being guilty of the crime of selling liquor. The messenger, bowed with age and bent with long years of toil and physical

struggle, calmly asserted, as he puffed away on a clay pipe, that the prisoner was innocent. After handing Ike a fee he told him that the trial would be held in the vestry of the meeting-house. Ike assured him that he would be there at the time appointed to hear the case.

Sile Lombard was a constable, who made it a part of his sacred duty to ferret out and chastise the offenders of the petty peace laws, and since a lawyer settled in the village gloried in the fact that now he would have an opportunity to take his cases to court.

About this time a temperance revival had crept into the village as the out-and-out Prohibitionists were becoming alarmed because of the sale and free use of Jamaica ginger and hard cider mixed. They claimed that four drinks of this concoction were sufficient to send even the best trained toddy-drinker down the street with a twist in his walk and his head full of grand opera airs. An organized system was being made to prosecute any person found guilty of selling such vile liquors. The services of the constable were engaged to perform detective duty. He insisted that Bill was not only an habitual drunkard, but that he was also guilty of selling liquor. A warrant was procured from Squire Blunt, and Bill was apprehended and held for trial.

After the arrest Lickety Billings claimed that it was Bill who stole an ulster from his meat wagon, and insisted on airing the charge against him in court. People had been expecting Bill to get into trouble for some time and Sile had been shadowing him in really detective style. He drinks. His wife says he can't help it. Some say he'd steal, and that he can't help that either, but then

neither of these peculiarities in his character had ever been established in court.

He had for some time kept the village from slumbering in quiet and silence, by performing some minor deed that displeased the constable and created a general uproar in the streets. For a long time his actions had been pardoned, but Sile thought he would take cognizance of this recent matter, and carry it before a tribunal of justice.

The trial came off in the vestry as scheduled. Holding court in Blueberry Falls was an important affair, and the edifice was crowded with people as never before.

Squire Blunt was a short, stout man, with a bald head and iron spectacles half-way down his nose, and presided at the trial with all the pomposity of a high-bred country squire. Although he had held a commission as a magistrate for nearly twenty years, this was the first opportunity he had to exercise his official authority in conducting the trial of an offender against the law. When he entered the vestry he took his seat behind the pulpit, and requested the constable to bring him a bottle of ink and three or four pens.

When Bill came into court, with despair in his face and rancor in his soul, his hands grimy and his hair somewhat ruffled, the magistrate struck the pulpit with the back of his hand, and said, "This meetin' — er trial — er lawsuit's come ter order."

The magistrate's uncertainty of the nature of the gathering brought a little titter from the crowd. Finally he announced, "There must be no loud and

boisterous laughing in this vestry during the trial. Gen'lemen, take off yer hats, this hain't no grocery store or cracker barrel congress. Salt boxes, with sawdust, has been pervided for them what uses terbacker. Be careful an' not spit terbacker juice on ther walls of ther vestry, 'cause it's hard ter wash off. Stand up, Bill Morley, and harken ter yer sentence."

"Why, you are not going to impose a sentence, yer honor, without giving the man a trial, are you?" interposed Ike.

"Who said I wuz goin' ter do that? ain't this a trial?" demanded the magistrate.

"P'raps 'tis," responded Ike.

"Well, you jest stand up, Bill, and hear me read a little," said the magistrate in a tone indicating that the magistrate's nerves were becoming unsteady in trying to perform official duties that were somewhat new to him.

When he finished reading the complaint and warrant charging Bill with selling intoxicating liquors in defiance of the Maine Prohibition Law, he looked straight at him over his spectacles and said, "Are yer guilty or not guilty?" Bill answered, "Not guilty," in a tone which one might imagine was calculated to bring tears to a pair of glass eyes.

"Well, how 'bout stealin' the ulster, are yer guilty or not guilty?" asked the magistrate.

"That's what, I s'pose, yer here fer," responded Bill, "ter find out."

"Now, your honour," responded Ike in a plaintive tone. I must maintain that your honor should not ask such a question as that. You have no right"—

"I don't mean ter 'sinate," said the magistrate, "that he's a thief, but I will bet five ter one that, if I should bait a steel trap with a silver ten-cent piece, and place it within six inches of his mouth, that we'd catch his soul. I guess I'll hear ther evidence agin him 'bout stealin' if I've a mind to."

"Why, yer honour," insisted Ike, "you've no right to ask him anything about stealing in a liquor case."

"What's that?" demanded the court with asperity. "Do you mean to set there and tell me that I don't have no right to ask all the questions I want to in my own court-room?"

"Your honor, it doesn't seem that the question has anything to do with this particular case. Now"—

"Hold on! it does. I want to make one job of it. If he's been a-stealin' I want ter know 'bout it. There's been too much devilin' round in the village lately."

"But that has no connection with this case."

"I tell yer it has. You be careful, young lawyer, or I'll fine yer for contempt of court."

"I have expressed no contempt for the court," said Ike; "on the contrary I have carefully concealed my feelings. I am simply asking to take up one case at a time. I know your honor's well up in the law, and I would not think of questioning your knowledge of conducting a trial. I was only insisting on a method of procedure such as I heard you telling about the other day. You know the law; oh, I'm satisfied about that; but, Mr. Magistrate, I ask as a favor to take up the liquor case first."

This compliment softened the magistrate, and he sank

back in his chair, as though all had recognized his superior qualifications as judge, and said, "The case may go on. Ace Bragdon, come forward and be sworn."

Ace walked forward as though a great weight was bearing upon his mind. The magistrate told him to hold up his hand and be sworn. Ace held up his left hand; the magistrate, looking at him, said, "Hold up yer other one." Whereupon Ace half frightened held up his right hand, and then had both hands in the air.

The magistrate said in a loud, commanding voice, "I tell yer ter hold up yer right hand, and ter never mind yer left one."

Ace was then so bewildered that he could not comprehend any of the instructions that were offered in chorus by the magistrate, lawyer and officers; finally Ike went over to the witness, bent his left arm downward, and whispered to him, "Hold up only one hand, the right one."

Then the oath was administered. The magistrate conducted the examination for the complainant, and without asking the usual preliminary questions of name, age, residence and occupation, commenced with this question, —

"Where did yer see ther respondent, July 10th?"

"I don't go to sea, Mr. Blunt."

"The question is, where was Bill Morley when he sold you the hard cider that Sunday night, out back of the meetin'-house?"

"He was out back of the meetin'-house, sir, but he didn't sell me no hard cider."

"I want you to tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothin' but the truth."

"Lawyer Glidden, what will I say ter him?" innocently inquired the witness.

"He wants you to swear that you bought rum of Bill Morley, so that they can put him in jail," explained the lawyer.

"They can't put Bill in jail on my swearin', I tell yer!"

"I want you ter answer my question," demanded the squire, and rapping his hand on the table said, "Didn't yer buy some hard cider of Bill Morley one night, just after ther Fourth of July?"

"No, sir, I didn't; yer can't put no one in jail on my 'ccount."

"Did you ever buy any liquor of Mr. Morley?" politely asked Lawyer Glidden.

"No, sir, I don't drink no rum, nor I don't buy no rum, an' my folks all but me is church members, an' I wouldn't swear to a lie fer ther hull town."

"That's all; you may step aside, Ace," said the magistrate.

There seemed to be considerable noise in the courtroom, people buzzing and moving about, that had a tendency to annoy the judge. He looked at the audience with a fierce cast in his countenance, and said harshly, as he pounded on the altar, "Order! order! We must have order in the court. Yer must stop this ere talkin' among the brethren." He stopped suddenly; "I didn't mean ter say that; I was thinkin' 'bout bein' in meetin'. But I must stop all this noise, here at this case." He began to whirl his hand around his head, to brush a fly off that had just lit on the bald spot, when Ike arose

and politely made the following inquiry, "Yer honor, has the state any other witnesses in this case?"

"Cussed, if I know. There, there, I didn't mean to say that. Bill Morley, you needn't laugh; I hain't got through with yer yet, so don't giggle so much 'bout my slip of ther tongue. Say, Sile, can't yer go out, and find 'nother witness somewhere?"

"Dunno, but I'll try ter do ther best I can," faithfully responded the constable. Sile left the court-room in quest of another witness, the magistrate settled back in his chair to wait for the constable's return and fell asleep.

A board stretched between two chairs, upon which were crowded a number of spectators, began to weaken, and suddenly broke with a great crash, abruptly awakening the magistrate. At this point he rose up with such a look of rage on his face that the crowd were astonished.

"Snappin' crackers! There's been too many of these snappin' crackers 'round since ther Fourth, and I want it stopped right off now. D'yer hear it?"

"Yaw, yaw, yaw, — woo — o — o —," laughed the crowd.

"Mind, I'll have some one o' yer up here in Bill Morley's place, if yer don't stop this injustice to ther court."

The audience quieted down again, and the magistrate lay back in his chair with one eye closed and the other intently fixed on a corner of the altar where a fly was roosting. By and by the fly arose in the air, and when an opportunity came lit on the bald spot. The magistrate had been waiting and expecting this action, and

was working out a quiet game of strategy in his mind of how he would kill it. The fly was crawling about nodding his head, and was just to perform a surgical operation on the top of his head by drawing blood, when the court reached for the warrant, and with that weapon forcibly raised his hand and struck the fly. Swat! the blow was fatal to the unsuspecting fly, and when he picked up the poor remains, a look of satisfaction spread over his countenance as though he had just captured the Philippines and was looking at a dead Spaniard. When he had gratified himself sufficiently on the triumph in the episode with the fly, he drew a wise look about his features, and said, "Wonder where Sile has gone?"

"He's a-comin'," responded half a dozen in chorus.

Sile arrived with Joe Sampson as a witness. He explained his long absence by stating that he made up his mind to have a positive proof this time. Joe Sampson was sworn.

"Mr. Sampson, please tell the court what you know about Bill Morley sellin' 'toxicatin' liquors," said the magistrate.

"Well, I can't say 'bout that 'zackly; but I saw him settin' in the middle of ther highway, makin' grabs in ther air, an' sayin' that he'd be d——d if he didn't catch the bed the next time it ran round."

"That has nothing to do with this case," said Ike.

"Well, what's the diff'rence 'twixt a man drinkin' and sellin' liquor?" interposed Joe.

"There is a vast difference, Mr. Sampson," said Ike.

"I call it just the same to be hung one way as t'other; if a man gits drunk it's jest as bad for the man as if he sells it."

"How do you make that out, Mr. Sampson?" asked Ike.

"I make that out because I know 'tis so," continued Sampson.

"Well, how do you know it is so?"

"I know it by my good knowledge and eddycashun."

"That is no reason why the law of one offence should apply to another."

"Don't the Bible say 't if a man drinketh and muddles his head, or something t' that 'ffect, that he'd be cuss'd fer ever?" insisted Joe.

"What has that got to do with Bill Morley selling liquor?" asked Ike.

"If a man 's put in jail fer sellin' liquor ain't he cussed, an' ain't it just the same to be cussed one way as t'other?" triumphantly continued Joe.

"Your honor, has the state any other witness?" inquired Ike.

"Don't see the need of any more witnesses; haven't we had two witnesses already?" answered the magistrate.

"Well, there does not seem to be any need of an argument in this case, as there is no evidence against my client, and he should be discharged."

"Yer could talk from now 'til supper's red dy, and it 'ud do no good, 'cause yer can't change my notion of this case; I've had my mind made up ever since Sile told me 'bout Bill bein' a-sellin'."

"The witnesses could not, and did not, testify as to the guilt of my client."

"The witness — the witnesses, they lied!" said the magistrate in an air of steadfastness.

Ike arose from his seat with the air of suppressed dignity, and immediately burst into a flight of oratory that was simply spell-binding in its effect upon the magistrate. The flexible tongue, oily voice and dramatic style simply hypnotized the magistrate. When he had finished his plea, and asked that the prisoner be discharged, the magistrate came out of the trance, and with scarcely any strength in his voice said, "He's not guilty, discharged, by God."

Each of the turbulent crowd shook hands with Bill Morley, and joined in three cheers for Lawyer Glidden.

CHAPTER VIII.

WIDOW GARLAND'S DARTER.

LIKE'S success in handling Hausel Hicks' affairs increased his law practice very rapidly. People came to him from all the neighboring villages for advice and to engage his services. His office rapidly became the objective point of almost everybody who came to town, so that at night it was a relief to find refuge in his quiet, cosy suite of rooms at the homelike hostelry of Blueberry Falls.

He had collected some standard law text-books, and though he was seldom seen to read them he seemed to absorb his knowledge of the law from association with them, and he made for himself a position in the business life of the village that was not dependent upon a diploma from a law school.

After his law practice became sufficiently established, he bought a team, that he might enjoy driving about the country and going to the trout brooks fishing; this being the favorite passtime of everybody in that section. He planned a trip to Schoodic one morning, and while he was arranging his tackle and gear a client called.

He was a short, round, red-faced, honest-looking man and went at his business without delay. "Misther Glidden," he said in a strong Irish brogue, "Me name is

Dennis Bogan. I've been fifty year in this counthry, man and bye, since I left Tipperary in the ould land. Me father before me and his father's father's father and his father's father before him was taught to love this land of the free. I was one of the fusht in this town to answer Pricident Lincoln's call for throops, and I went through the war to defend the flag and free the naygurs anyhow. Bad cess to the naygurs! Fer forty year I've raised the flag at the town-house on Fourth of July, and me heart has burned wid love fer it, as I saw its glorious colors wavin' over me and I thought of the roar and the blackness of the battle whin the glint of its colors through the smoke turned our despair into detarmination and made of us men who'd folly it into —. And we did, and we came out of it victoriously. But last St. Pathrick's Day whin I flew the flag of me native land at me own house there kem a crowd headed be Blusther Rankin and harangued be Ansel Hicks. Bad cess to the two of thim! they insulted me and towld me they'd tare me flags to ribbons. I made short work of thim with me old Springfield, and a good supply of salt I had pickling me pork. I undherstand that Lickety Billins, the thafe, took his meals standin' fer a fortnight and everybody said he was not so fresh as usual. — But phwat I want to ax you is this, — haven't I a right to raise me father's flag (God rest his sowl!) alongside me own flag on St. Pathrick's Day widout being called a foreigner, a traitor or have me flag insulted?"

"You certainly have a right, Dennis, to honor the emblem of your race and its love and devotion to

principle, and all honest men will support you in it. The law sustains you, and I give you my word that next St. Patrick's Day the green flag of constancy will float proudly by the starry flag of liberty and toleration or Ike Glidden 'll be afraid to stand by what is right."

"Glory be to God and billy for you!" exclaimed Dennis Bogan. "Good-day, Mr. Glidden, and God bless you!" — "I'll be goin' now."

When Dennis had gone Ike went over to Ansel Hicks' store, where the usual loafers had gathered to discuss the current topics of the day, to see if he might find some one to accompany him, and as he entered the store Ace Bragdon was stretched out on the only chair, with his long, lank legs occupying half the floor space in the store and the smoke from an old pipe surrounding him in clouds. Ame Blibbers was sitting on the counter, and his face worked with comical movements as he attempted to reduce his tobacco quid to a convenient size. Bluster Rankin, the newsy member of the gathering, was serving up with delicious exaggeration an account of his last horse trade. Ansel had just swept the middle of the store, carefully avoiding the corners, and was about to make a bluff at brushing the dust off his fifteen-year-old stock of shelf goods, to make it appear salable, when he noticed Ike.

"How der do, Mr. Glidden. Be you a-goin' fishin' ter-day?" said he.

"Yes, and I have come over to see if you would be kind enough to introduce me to some gentleman who might also enjoy the trip."

Ansel very gladly introduced him to each of his



ANSEL HICKS, — "HOW DER DO, MR. GLIDDEN, BE YE AGOIN' FISHIN' TERDAY?"

regulars. Ace said, "I'd like ter go with yer, but I'm so thund'rin' busy hoeing my garden these days, I can't spare the time." The man called Bluster said, "I'se go in a minute with yer, and take my horse too, but calc'late there'll be a gentleman here to-day frum Jonesb'ry ter change hosses with me." Something in the appearance of the man and sound of his voice struck Ike as familiar and he wondered where he had ever met him. By that time it had got around to Ame, and he said, "I ain't scared of the time, but re'lly if yer'll wait till I go up on the aidge of ther hill and hang a screen door for Jeff'son Kelly's wife, I'd go with yer and take yer ter ther best trout pool anywhere around. I'd go right now, only I hate to disappoint Jeff's wife, as I promised I'd do it last week, but I didn't get round ter it."

It seems hardly necessary to state that it did not require much persuasion from Ike, assisted by Ansel, to induce Ame to let everything else go at loose ends and to start off on the trip. Before they had driven out half a mile Ame commenced, "This is a pretty good driver you've got here for an old feller; b'lieve he drives better'n when Bluster Rankin had him."

"You seem to know this horse," said Ike.

"Why, bless yer life, yes! this is Hector; he's trotted in races an' he's got a record; but late years he's been swapped clearn round the circuit of traders, and finally Joe Cook got him and held on ter him until you got him."

"Is there anybody in this country who does not trade horses?" asked Ike.

"Dunno as you would call 'em horse trades, b'cause some of the dickerers round here don't trade fair. It may be all right to put a kicking horse onto a man ; but when it comes to cheatin' a poor widder woman and her daughter right out of a pretty good horse, and give them a kicker that no one can drive, I don't call it hoss-tradin'."

"Who did such a trick as that?" inquired Ike.

"Why Bluster Rankin and Lickety Billins did. Yer know the Widow Garland, who lives up around here, has got a darter what's pretty good-lookin', an' she got ter thinking their old farm horse wasn't quite stylish enough ter drive ter town with, so 'tween her an' her mother they thought they would trade fer one a little more spirited, an' them aire thieves went up there with a high-headed kicker, what no woman would dare to ride behind, and beat them right fair square out of their only horse, and gave them one that can kick the stars out of the heavens."

"That was a mighty mean thing to do ; are Bluster and Lickety Billings in company?" asked Ike.

"Oh, no, they just pull together sometimes, when there's a chance fer a dicker with some one that's not so smart as they be ; but, when there's nobody else to trade with, they shift horses amongst theirselves," said Ame.

"Yes, that's the way with all rogues ; they will usually combine to beat an innocent person, and when they cannot find a victory they keep in practice by stealing from or by cheating each other," remarked Ike.

"It occurred only a few days ago, and the widder and her darter both have ter walk now if they go anywhere; I'd like ter call and get the whole story frum the widder herself. Yer know I'm well acquainted with all the folks up this way," said Ame.

"Very well, if you choose, we will drive in," answered Ike. While Ame was talking Ike had been trying to think where and when he had seen Rankin before, and it finally dawned upon him that he saw him in Vermont and that it was he that helped to cheat him out of the three-year-old colt.

"Be you a married man, Mr. Glidden?"

"Why, of course not; what in the world made you ask me such a question?"

"Well, I thought maybe if yer warn't I'd make you acquainted with the widder's darter."

"Certainly; you must introduce me to the young lady; I would be very much pleased to know her."

When the Garland homestead was reached they drove into the yard, and Ame introduced Ike with a great deal of gusto and formality. To his great delight and astonishment Ike saw in the younger woman the beautiful girl who had been his first client. The recognition was mutual. Both blushed until even the dense Ame observed it.

The story of the horse trade and the experience with the kicking horse were discussed in detail, and when Ame had learned all the news of that quarter possible to get by asking questions they proceeded on their trip to Schoodic.

During the remainder of the day Ike was in a dream-

like mood, and took but little interest in the fishing or anything else. When they were passing the Garlands' house on their way home, he said to Ame in a half-abstracted tone, "If it were not so late we might call on Mrs. Garland; but we will come up again some day, Mr. Blibbers."

"There, Mr. Glidden, I've been a-wonderin' all day what come over you; but now I know it's that gal of the widder's you've been a-thinkin' about. I see you blush when your eyes first sot on her. Oh, won't Mrs. Blibbers laugh when she hears it!"

"I'll tell you what I've had on my mind," said Ike, "and it is the thought of these two good women being cheated out of their horse, and being obliged to walk if they have occasion to go anywhere."

"Yes, I knew Mandy would 'ttract your 'ttention; she's a mighty fine gal, and I don't blame you for wantin' to come up again some day."

"You don't really understand me, Mr. Blibbers, as I meant that we should have to come up again some day and exchange horses with Mrs. Garland. I'd give my horse to that woman before I would see her and her daughter walking about these country roads, and as I presume she does not place any value on that kicking horse, I'm coming up here to-morrow to give her my horse and take the kicker if she will allow me to do so."

"You don't mean it?" said Ame, manifesting great surprise.

"That's what I propose to do," responded Ike.

"Sir, if yer do, you'll be ther greatest feller in ther whole country," enthusiastically said Ame.

"That's all right, but just wait a while and keep quiet. I'll watch for an opportunity and trade horses with Bluster and that Billings, and if I don't give them the hot end of the poker for what they've done with those women folks! Don't say a word."

"No, I won't say nuthin'; 'twould be a good one on 'em if yer coo'd only get it back on 'em, but yer know them fellers is pretty foxy."

The next day Ame and Ike went up to the Garlands', leading Hector with a halter behind another horse and carriage.

Ike said to Ame, "Now I don't want her to think that this exchange is to be any charity business, and I will commence in a real trading kind of a way, and if we exchange, woman-like she will feel that she is a pretty capable business woman, after all, in being able to exchange a worthless kicking horse for a good horse or one that is suitable for anybody to drive. You know that would please her much better than if I offer to give her my horse."

"All right; I won't say a word to her about what you are up to."

It might not have taken so long for Ike and Mrs. Garland to make an exchange, but it took Ike so long to gaze at Mandy every time he said anything; however, in the course of a short time they closed a transaction, and Ame and Ike started for home, leading the kicker on a halter.

Ike requested Ame not to let anybody know about the deed of kindness, but he was then not so well acquainted with Ame as he was afterwards, for it was

utterly impossible for Ame to refrain from telling people of the noble act of the new lawyer. After Ike had exchanged horses with Mrs. Garland he was practically without a driving horse, because he would not even attempt to drive the "kicker;" so he purchased another horse, and then was in keeping with the custom of that section, as all prosperous people there keep a "driver" and a "trader." Then, too, within a few days he secured another horse and a carriage in settlement of a lawsuit, and he was in fact unintentionally getting into the horse business. A barn was rented, and Zeke Kirk engaged to take care of the horses until some disposition could be made of them.

When Ike drove out to Mrs. Garland's one afternoon, to see how they liked the new horse, he was uncertain whether the bewitching smiles on the face of the widow's daughter were for him or because she was pleased with the new horse; but afterwards, when they became better acquainted, he could trace the beginning of their friendship away back to the time of those sly glances and pleasing smiles.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLIND COLT.

THE next week Ike sent Zeke Kirk away with the kicking horse, instructing him to trade him for some worthless nag whose identity was unknown in Blueberry Falls, at the same time requesting him not to sell or dispose of him to any old man, woman or innocent person, but to seek to exchange him with some dickerer. Zeke set out leading the kicker behind a team, and took the direction leading to Bangor. In a few days he returned, proudly leading a handsome, high-stepping and loose-moving young horse. Ike inquired where and how he happened to acquire such a nice-looking colt in exchange for the kicker, and was informed that he received him from a real horse trader, and that this beautifully built colt was totally blind, but that he considered him worth much more than the kicker and, of course, he exchanged for him.

“Do you suppose Bluster Rankin or Lickety Billings knows this colt?” smilingly inquired Ike.

“No,” said Zeke; “this colt was raised in Roostick, and nobody here ever seen him afore.”

“All right; don’t let anybody know he is blind, and we will have some fun with Bluster and Lickety Billings. We will teach them to put a kicker on a ‘widder woman,’ ” said Ike.

"No, sir," proudly responded Zeke; "I won't say nothin' to nobody."

It was not long before Lickety Billings' meat cart came rumbling and rattling up street, and stopped in front of the hotel. Ike, rushing into the stable, requested Zeke to harness the blind colt into his light road-wagon and exhibit him for Lickety's benefit. When the man with the meat cart led his team out into the street again, Ike drove past him with the blind colt like a shot from a gun; the colt's head erect, and Ike holding the reins tight for fear of the colt's getting out of the middle of the road. He drove down across the bridge, turned around, passed the man in the meat cart at such a rate of speed that he could not even exchange greetings with him, and returned to the stable to put up the team.

"This colt can go like a whirlwind," said Ike, while Zeke was removing the harness, "but he isn't safe for a minute. I was afraid two or three times that he was going off the road or might run into a team. If he wasn't blind he'd be well worth five hundred dollars, but as he is, I do not consider him worth a cent."

When Lickety completed his circuit, and had visited all his meat customers, he drove up to the Glidden stable to loaf a few minutes and get the news of the village, and as he entered said,—

"How be ye, Ike? What's that high flyer I seen you drivin' this forenoon?"

"Oh, that's a trader I've got here," replied Ike.

"A trader!" said Lickety, "I guess you wouldn't trade that fellow unless you got a pretty good horse and a big walletful of tens."

"Oh, yes, I'd trade anything; so my folks always elaimed," good-naturedly responded Ike.

"I guess you're only joking," doubtfully remarked Lickety.

"Oh, no; I'm ready to dieker any horse I've got, at any time."

"Well, let me and you get up a trade; b'lieve we've never swapped yet. How will you trade for Denmark Jr.?" inquired Lickety.

"I'll trade either Denmark Jr., Watchmaker, or the colt you saw me driving this morning, with you for your horse and fifty dollars."

"Let me see the colt, Zeke, won't you? Lead out that air colt, so I can look him over," demanded Lickety.

Looking over the colt, feeling his limbs, and making the usual jockey examination, Billings asked where the colt was raised, and Ike informed him that it was raised in Aroostook and had just come from that section.

"Looks pretty smooth, and I b'lieve he is as smooth as a trout," Billings said, "but then you're only guying me about trading; you wouldn't trade for my old hoss," said Billings.

"I'll trade for anything, but am not anxious. My only trouble is when I make an offer I always stick to it, if it ruins me. I know I ought not to have offered the colt to you for your horse and only fifty, but there I will not take back water," shrewdly said Ike.

"No, if it's anything I hate it's a squealer or a kicker," said Billings, reaching for his wallet; "if yer mean business here's yer money, and we'll call it a trade."

"All right," said Ike, reaching to accept the money.

As quick as a flash, and without any request, Zeke commenced to unharness Billings' horse and to fit the harness to the colt. Zeke had figured as assistant in so many horse trades before this one, that he was keen enough to assist Billings in hooking the colt into the meat wagon and took full charge of the operation.

When Billings was departing for home, with the blind colt harnessed in the meat wagon, Ike told him to be sure and hold the reins tight, and to always drive on the bit, because the colt was a high-life fellow; fearing that if Billings did not drive on a tight rein, he might discover before he got well underway that the colt was blind.

Billings started, driving the colt "away up in G," and reining him in a manner that would have done Budd Doble proud, and Ike and Zeke laughing heartily at how easily they had worked him.

"There," victoriously said Ike, "that pays him for beating that widow woman up in Pineville out of her farm horse."

On the way home Billings unavoidably collided with a carriage in which were two ladies out pleasure driving, and ran into a heavily piled load of timber, but he never even suspected that the colt was blind. Thinking that the cause of the accidents was due to the colt's high spirits, and his not having been fully broken, he said to himself, "That's why I got him so easy. The colt's got lots of ginger in him, and hain't half broken, and Ike was afraid of him. I'll take those kinks out of him, and when I get him ironed out and squared away, I'll

take him over to Bar Harbor and sell him fer a high figger to one of those rusticators."

Billings' barn was of small structure and had a full-sized window near the door, and in grooming his horse he usually tied him to a ring bolt outside; the day after the trade he attempted to lead the colt on a loose halter outside the barn, where he was going to administer the curry-comb and brush treatment. As he came through the door he heard crashing and smashing of glass, and looking back saw the colt's head protruding through the window.

Billings came out through the door, but the colt evidently thought it would come out through the window (near the door). "What in thunder possessed this colt to cut and scratch himself up this way by shoving his head through this window," mused Billings, as he began to extricate the colt's head from the shattered sash of the window. When he got the colt clear of the entanglement, cleaned and groomed, he led it towards the pump for the purpose of giving him his morning drink. In walking down the lane, behind its owner and on the end of a loose halter, the poor thing could not keep in the well trodden path, and after running up against the stone wall that formed one side of the lane, finally stumbled and went headlong upon a heap of rocks thrown alongside of the stone wall. As he grasped the colt by the head to assist him to arise Billings muttered to himself, "Wonder what is the matter with this fellow, b'lieve he's got the staggers." At this juncture Dennis Bogan, who was driving up, halted to inquire of Billings if he cared to buy a beef cow that he was fattening.

"Come up here, Dennis, just the man I want," said Billings. Dennis drove into the yard, hitched his horse to the corner of the barn, and followed down the lane to where Billings was smoothing the ruffled hair on the colt's forelegs, the result of his entanglement with the rock heap.

After explaining to Dennis the experience he had just had with the colt he asked if there could possibly be any reason to suspect that the colt might be sick or subject to spells of dizziness or weakness. Dennis requested him to lead the colt along until he might see how he appeared when moving, and when they reached the drinking fountain or tub at the pump, the colt almost stumbled over it, and did not offer to drink until his nose was forced into the tub, when he began to drink freely with all the thirst of a sound horse.

"Oi'll tell yer ther thrubble ; oi'll bet yer the baste es bloind ; let me shake my hat in his face and see if he will wink his eyes." Holding his hat and shaking it, first at one and then at the other eye, to test the sight, Dennis made the fatal announcement, "He's as bloind as a bat."

The revolutions of Billings' mind and the conversation that took place between him and Dennis when it was really settled that the colt was blind were never recorded. However, Billings decided to return to Ike Glidden, demand a return of his former horse, and to threaten criminal prosecution for swindling him by trading such a worthless and really dangerous horse on to him without even intimating that it was blind. Ike was very patient, allowed Billings to run on, quoting

law on frauds, accusing him of mean and low-life methods and demanding that he "swap back"; and when Ike thought he had allowed him to get really good and mad, and to think he was a terror to law-breakers, he simply thanked him for his compliments and for applying so many choice and pet names to him. While Billings was still thinking himself the conqueror of the episode Ike commenced to lecture Billings for assisting Bluster Rankin in cheating the poor Widow Garland out of her only horse, and for giving her a kicking and dangerous horse, and told him that he was considering the matter of entering complaint against them for swindling the widow, and thus giving them the full benefit of such law. Furthermore he informed Billings that the blind colt was brought to town for the express purpose of trading it on either him or Rankin, just to even up the Widow Garland trade.

With rather a crest-fallen and forlorn look and a downward cast in his eye, Billings said in a faltering voice, "Well, how'd yer trade with me and let me have 'Watchmaker' for the colt?"

"I'll let you have Watchmaker for the colt and fifty dollars," responded Ike.

"Bless your life! I couldn't pay that much, because I haven't got it, and I'm in a fix, as I cannot use the colt in my meat cart and am really worse off than as if I had none at all," remarked Billings.

"When you and Bluster put that kicking horse on to the Garland family, they were worse off than if they had no horse," said Ike victoriously.

"Well, if you will give me time on part of it, I'll

agree to give the colt and fifty dollars for Watchmaker; I can pay ten now, and the balance I will certainly pay within two months."

"That's all right; I will wait two months for the forty dollars, but I must have security on your team that you will pay me within that space of time."

"That's all right; I'll do that; but, between you and me, don't for the Lord's sake say anything to any of the folks around here about this trade, because the boys would never let up on me about it."

After they went to Ike's office and made out a paper for the security of the payment of the forty dollars and changed the horse, Ike went down town for a fresh supply of cigars, and as he proceeded along the street, saw a gathering of four or five men standing on the platform in front of Ansel Hicks' store. "Here he comes," said a voice. "How about it?" said another. "They say you blistered Billings with a hot poker," said another of the party. Approaching the men he found Dennis Bogan entertaining Rankin and several others with a laughable description of the Billings episode with the blind colt; while a general laugh was in full progress about one of the princes of horse traders in the community trading for a blind colt, one of the men jokingly said to Ike, "I think you're one of the most dangerous men we've got in the horse business."

Bluster seemed to enjoy listening to his former side partner being roasted more than any of the others; and on hearing the last remark he said to Ike, "I'd as lief trade horses with you as any man between here and Bangor, because I know you're a square man."

"All right," said Ike with ready wit, "I've got the mate to the blind colt, and I'll trade it with you for your horse that stands there in that wagon," pointing to Bluster's team tied to a post in front of the store.

"It's a go," said Bluster in his rough and ready manner. They both stepped into Bluster's wagon, and drove to Ike's stable. Bluster did not know that Billings and Ike had exchanged horses again; and, in fact, it might have seemed to almost everybody that sufficient time had not elapsed for the last chapter in the colt's career to have taken place. However, he traded with Ike, and never even suspected for a minute that it was the same colt that Dennis had seen at Billings' that morning. In less than twenty minutes from the time they left the crowd in front of the store to go to Ike's stable, Bluster came down the street, holding tight on the reins, and the colt going at a forty clip. When passing the crowd he heard cheering and laughing and some one say, "Hold on, Bluster, till I see you;" and as he stopped he recognized the voice he had just heard, and the man coming toward him as Dennis, and then he heard Dennis say in a still louder voice, "By hovens, Bluster's got the blind colt."

The crowd gathered around the horse, some testing his sight, others making remarks about his fine appearance, but most of them nagging Bluster about the trade he had just made.

Bluster returned to Ike's stable, followed by the crowd, and said, "There, didn't think you was so mean as to do that to me; you have proved yourself to be a scoundrel; I tender you this blind colt, and demand my horse."

"Well, Bluster, I'm dreadfully sorry; I haven't much personal knowledge of your principles, but judging from what they say you did to the Widow Garland, I think you are getting paid in your own coin for the job you perpetrated on that kind old lady."

"What's that got to do with you on this trade?" growled Bluster.

"It's got this much to do with it, that I would not be a party to a transaction to cheat any person out of a ten-cent piece, but when I learned about your cheating those people out of their family horse, and, worse than that, giving them a horse that almost kicked the roof off their barn, and exposing them to the dangers of such an animal, I made up my mind, as the sheriff had made no attempt to prosecute you, that I would take the matter into my own hands, and in my simple way mete out justice to you. This colt was brought here for the express purpose of trading it on to either you or Billings; and I am pleased, and think everybody else in the village is pleased, that you both got blistered with him."

The crowd laughed and hissed. Bluster got into his wagon, and as he was driving off looked mighty cheap, but still mustered up courage to say to Ike, sarcastically, "You must be chairman of the Committee of Fifteen!"

"Yes," said Ike, "and the next time you cheat either an old man or an old woman you will get fifteen years."

CHAPTER X.

JOE SAMPSON BUYS A HORSE.

ONE morning Ike drove out to see Joe Sampson, to whom he wished to sell a horse that he wished to dispose of. After he had driven about a mile and a half he inquired of a tin peddler, "Where do the Sampsons live?" and was courteously informed that their house was the next on the right. While Ike knew that Joe's wealth was deposited in the Bank of Hope, and consisted of a somewhat cloudy prospect of obtaining a pension, he imagined from his acquaintance with him that he at least occupied a fairly good home even if he did not own one, but the "next house on the right" proved a disappointment. It was an old and dilapidated-looking structure, pleasantly set on a knoll near the edge of the woods, not far from the river. On the right were a small potato patch and some other evidences of an indifferent attempt at farming. The unpainted shingles were worn and weather-beaten, a number of squares of glass were missing from the window sashes, and all the repairs that had been made were of the patchwork order. A hovel built of rails and thatched over had evidently served as shelter for the cow and hens, and its appearance indicated the easy-going temperament of the Sampson family. When Joe saw Ike turning into the yard, he reached for his hat and coat

and started for the door, with coat half on, and struggling to get his hand from the entanglement in the lining of the left sleeve. Ike called out, "Whoa, Jerry, whoa, back, whoa I tell you! How do you do, Joe? Jerry is on his mettle this morning, sure; couldn't stop him until he got right up on to your front-door steps."

"How de do, Mr. Glidden? nice morning, ain't it?" responded Joe. "Good-lookin' hoss you got there."

Ike then went through the usual preliminaries of the bargain and sale of a broken-down old sport of a horse, and Joe assumed the rôle of a man cautious about getting in debt, suspicious of being talked about for buying a spavined horse, and he appeared indifferent about making such an extravagant purchase until he obtained a pension.

A sale was finally consummated, Joe also purchasing a wagon and harness, the value of all being fixed at one hundred dollars. Joe was to pay ten dollars down and the balance when he came off the blueberry plains; he was to give Ike a bill of sale of the horse, wagon, harness, a cow, and a flock of hens, to secure payment of the hundred dollars.

When the trade was closed, and they were arranging to go to town and have the writings made out, Joe called the folks out to see the new purchase. Out they came, — Joe's son Benny, Liza, his wife, and Delia Pinkham, his stepdaughter, full of glee and curiosity to see "their" horse.

When they had really satisfied themselves that they were to own this nice team, Ike and Joe got into the carriage and started for the village. On the way Ike asked Joe why he didn't move into town.

"Think I will," responded Joe, "Liza's ben a-wantin' to do so for some time; but, you see, I've ben waitin' to see if my pension would come afore makin' a change."

"Is your stepdaughter contented where you live?" inquired Ike.

"No; she's ben dreadful lunsome, and wants us to start for the plains to-morrow."

"Does your whole family intend to go up during the picking season?"

"Why, bless your life! Delia and her mother kin pick more'n any four men on the Barrens."

"Well, I'll tell you, Joe," said Ike, "when you return from the plains, you should rent the Silsby house on the Pineville road, and if, later on, you get a pension, you might buy it. I have the management of that property and will rent it to you at a very reasonable price."

"By gorry, if I should go home and tell Liza about such a notion, she'd begin right off to plan which one of them fellows in the town Delia would have for a beau. I tell you Liza's got high notions, and would be in society if I only get my pension. She dreams about such things almost every night, and when she wakes in the morning and finds her dream is only a delusion, she's as cross as an old she-bear all day long, and even the dog knows her so well now that he don't come into the house on such days. She darsen't let her spite out on me and Delia, so she takes a chair or a stick and gives it to the dog every time he pokes his head under the dinner table."

"The Silsby place would make you a respectable home. There is a good barn on the place, and it would

be so much nicer for Delia and your wife than the place you now occupy. If I were you I would engage it to-day."

"Yes, sir; you see I will be in town every other night while the pickin' season lasts, as I intend to haul our berries to the factory myself, and I can use the Silsby barn."

"That's so," said Ike, as they drove to the door leading to his office, where they went to make the writings concerning the horse sale.

Joe made some pretence at buying the Silsby place, promising to pay for it when he received his pension, and at once arranged to move, and succeeded in causing all their belongings to be transferred to their new home before the family left for the Barrens.

About the close of the berry season a theatre company was billed to appear "one night only," and present the celebrated drama entitled "Married, but not Mated," at the town hall in Blueberry Falls. Everybody looked forward to the event of that grand play. Upon persistent urging on the part of Tim Cronin and Ike, Joe Sampson was induced to go and occupy a front seat with them.

Joe had never before attended an entertainment of this kind. A theatre was an institution of which he had no knowledge, and the scenery, glitter of lamps, and of the footlights completely captivated his attention. He was much impressed with the stage fixtures, and the entire play seemed to him to be one of absorbing interest.

In time Joe had fixed his eyes on every movement of

the actors and gave his whole attention to the play, and became so mesmerized with its effect that for a while he imagined everything to be real.

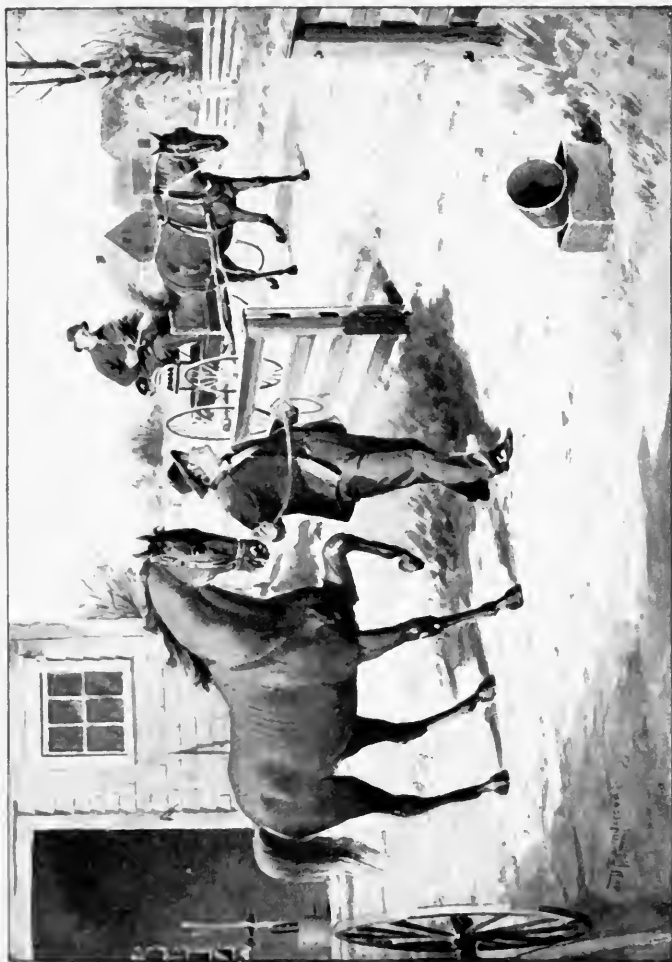
When his interest seemed to be most earnest a scene was unrolled showing a dense forest, and the heroine appeared in the woodland, and a villain in ambush rushed out, seized the beautiful young woman, and thrust a knife into her bosom as she fell staggering to the ground. The dagger was of the usual stage device, that, when jerked from its fatal place in its victim's bosom, allowed red-colored water to trickle down the blade in imitation of blood. The scene was too much for Joe; his eyes and mind were so intent on the actors that he dreamed that he was witnessing a real tragedy, and when he saw drops of blood on the blade of the assassin's dagger, he suddenly arose from his seat, and yelled out in great excitement while attempting to spring upon the stage, "Great God, kill the villain! kill him!"

The audience for a minute supposed that Joe had become crazy, until he came out of his trance, stepped back and sat down in his settee.

During the remainder of the performance the crowd laughed and cheered so much that the actors, not being aware of Joe's attack of insanity, thought that the cheering was in applause of their good acting, and near the close of the last act, the leading man protruded his head through the interstice at the side of the curtain, to thank the audience for their close attention and kind applause, when he heard a boy in the back of the hall say, "Kill the villain! kill him!" and the actor, thinking the re-

mark was intended for himself, quickly pulled in his head, and during the remainder of the play the actors seemed very uneasy.

When the curtain fell on the last act, and the crowd began to depart from the hall, continuous cries of "Kill the villain! kill him!" arose from the youngsters joyously seeking their way homeward, and whom the theatre people supposed were a lot of hoodlums wreaking vengeance on their leading man for some reason unknown to them. Consequently they were afraid to leave the hall and go to the hotel, until the janitor went out and induced Ike to return with him and explain the cause of the wicked and mournful-sounding cries of "Kill him! kill the villain!"



"CHEATED OUT OF HIS HORSE."

CHAPTER XI.

CHEATED OUT OF HIS HORSE.

LICKETY BILLINGS went into his barn one morning, and after placing a feed of grain and hay in the horse's crib, he noticed that the horse did not eat. He came into possession of the animal in a trade about dusk the evening before, and there was reason to fear it was not sound in body and limb. Lickety led the horse by the halter out into the yard, to obtain a good look at him in broad daylight. When he had finished the survey of the stiff-jointed, blighted old animal, he returned to the stable, pulling the halter and horse after him, shaking his head as if a serious problem was working its way from his heart to his head, and thinking to himself, "I'll have to get out of this somehow, before people will find out how badly I'm beaten." With his hands in his trousers pockets and his eyes looking downward in deep thought, he walked out to the side of the road. Looking up, in the distance he saw Joe Sampson coming down the Pineville road in a creaking old grocery wagon (thickly coated with dust) behind a shaggy gray mare, her head lowering in a desponding attitude, but with a look of grit and ruggedness, while her tail was waving incessantly, like the new flag on the Squirmtown school-house. A brilliant thought flashed across the mind of Lickety, as he rushed into the house and took from the

kitchen table his wife's pint bottle of "alkehol and camp-fire" which she had for rubbing the "runitiz" out of her limbs. Starting for the barn he poured the whole pint of alcohol and camphor down the throat of the "trader." After the empty bottle was concealed behind a beam and his hands were wiped from the spatter of alcohol and camphor, he went down to the roadside to hail Joe, who by this time was abreast of the house.

"Yer out pretty early, ain't yer, Mr. Sampson."

"Yes; I'm a-goin' to Jonesbr'y, an' I want ter get back by noon."

"If yer had my horse you'd get back quick enough," said Lickety.

"What have yer fer a horse, Mr. Billins?"

"Drive inter my yard and see."

Joe drove into the yard, and Lickety went into the barn and brought out his trader. By this time the alcohol was working through every vein and muscle of the old horse, causing it to come out as frisky and lively as a colt, and Lickety proudly looked up at Joe and said, "There now, wouldn't you like to have him? how would you trade, for the sake of gittin' a good horse like this?"

It was so early in the morning that Joe little dreamed that Lickety had been up long enough to play such a jockey trick on him, and was very favorably impressed with the style, action and appearance of Billings' horse.

"How old do you call him?"

"Really, I couldn't answer that, because the man that I got him from didn't raise him," shrewdly answered Lickety.

Joe looked into the horse's mouth and said, "Suppose he's more'n twelve?"

"Say, yer judgment must be bad if yer think a horse more'n twelve can dance on a halter like this feller."

"Well, I guess he hain't mor'n twelve, anyway," said Joe; "how will yer trade?"

"I'll trade fer ten dollars to boot."

"I ain't got but a dollar with me, and I'll give yer that," said Joe, who had but recently made the final payment on his horse.

"Ho, I'd niver spoil a hoss trade for the sake of a few dollars," keenly responded Lickety.

They exchanged horses, Joe paying Lickety the one dollar difference. When he reached Jonesboro he found that his new horse was badly fagged out, and beginning to show signs of lameness, and upon examination of his feet and legs he discovered that the horse was minus a shoe, and at once took it to a blacksmith shop to have a new shoe tacked on. When the horse entered the shop the blacksmith said, "Hello, the old fellow stands it pretty well; I supposed he was dead long ago."

"Why, do you know this horse?" inquired Joe.

"I think I ought ter; I shod him the first year I kept this shop, and that was more'n twenty-four years ago; and I shod him all the time they run him on the mail team, and that was in the seventies," answered the blacksmith.

"How old was he when you first shod him?"

"P'raps eight or nine," said the blacksmith.

"That can't be; why, yer a-makin' my horse to be thirty-two or thirty-three years old!"

“Well, he’s all o’ that, an’ I bet yer a dollar he’s mor’n that,” said the blacksmith.

When the blacksmith had finished driving the last nail in the shoe Joe led his horse out, and did not seem to care to discuss the age of his new acquisition longer. While on the way home the poor old beast fagged out, and along toward dark and when within almost sight of the Billings homestead, it dropped by the side of the road and never even raised its head again. This seemed indisputably to be a case of old age and enervation, coupled with an electric shock from the effects of the dose of alcohol and camphor. Joe went up to the Billings homestead and rapped on the door. Soon Lickety came, lamp in hand, to see who might be there. Joe stood there, tired, weary, broken-hearted, and almost speechless, but he finally recovered sufficiently to inform Lickety of his sad loss and misfortune. Lickety reached for his lantern and went with Joe to the place where the horse had fallen, and as quick as wit said to Joe, “It must be a case of overdrivin’ or heart failure,” and Joe, not realizing that the horse had been doctored, said, “’Tain’t no case of overdrivin’, but guess it’s a case of heart failure.”

Lickety got his horse and hauled Joe’s wagon and harness up, insisting on his having supper, to which Joe readily assented. While Joe was eating supper Lickety suggested that a subscription paper be started for the purpose of raising sufficient money with which to buy another horse, volunteering to head such a paper himself by subscribing one dollar, — the same one Joe had given him that morning. After supper he took his

horse and carriage and carried Joe home, continually advising him to start out bright and early the next morning to get the lawyer to make out a heading for a paper, and to push it around hard while the loss of the horse was fresh and new.

Joe was up early next morning and got a subscription paper properly drafted, secured the names of Ike and Dennis Bogan for five dollars each, and then commenced to push it with great vigor. By the close of the second day he had collected nearly one hundred dollars. Ike advised him as he was doing so well to go over to Monsapec with the subscription paper, and push it around there, and perhaps he might get enough to pay off the mortgage on his house. Through his perseverance Joe secured sufficient money to pay the mortgage and to buy a good horse, and when he told Ike of his good luck in the begging venture, Ike for a joke said to him, "Now Squirmtown is going to have a great boom, and there is an opening for a hotel, and as you have succeeded in collecting money enough to buy a house and horse, I would suggest that you keep right on collecting and you may get enough to buy a hotel."

Joe did "keep on," visited as he said "Jonesb'ry, Monsapec, the Pint, and Squirmtown," and to the surprise of everybody raked in enough to buy a farm in Squirmtown from Lawyer Glidden. Lickety congratulated Joe on his great success by telling him that "the death of that old black horse was the beginning of your fortune, an' if it wasn't for me you'd niver have had the horse."

CHAPTER XII.

SQUIRM'S BLUEBERRY BITTERS.

ON a Sunday afternoon Ike with a matched pair of colts harnessed to a light carriage drove out through the green and romantic country that stretched before him on all sides, and proceeded along the Pineville road. When he reached the Garland homestead he turned into the driveway leading to the house and stopped at the front door. Mandy came to the door and extended him a pleasant greeting.

"Like to go to ride, Mandy?" said Ike.

"Reely I'd be pleased to go," responded Mandy, as she darted back into the house for her wraps.

While he was waiting for Mandy to arrange her dress, Mrs. Garland came to the front door, and said, "How d'yer do, Mr. Glidden, goin' ter Squirmtown ter hear ther new minister?"

"Didn't know there were services up there to-day," said Ike. "Guess 'twould be a good plan to go up."

When Mandy came out Ike suggested, "Suppose we go to meeting in the upper district; your mother says there's a new preacher there to-day?"

"Very well," said Mandy, "and after the services we can call on Aunt Hannah. You probably know of her; she is Mrs. Deacon Squirm."

They drove along, and as they approached Squirm-

town they saw numerous teams,—some of the two-seated “Democrat” type, others of the Concord pattern, and many of the very old-fashioned style, each filled principally with members of the gentler sex, arrayed in bright ribbon-trimmed shirtwaists, and flower-garden hats, and all going in the direction of the meeting-house on the hill.

They arrived at the church just as singing commenced, and were ushered into seats in a conspicuous section of the edifice, and with uneasiness waited until the minister finished his sermon. Everybody seemed to wear an expression of relief when the last “Amen” was pronounced, and was evidently glad to be able to breathe freely once more.

As the congregation began to leave the church many of the young ladies glanced over at Mandy and Ike, and caught the eight-by-ten smile displayed by Mandy, probably because she was in such popular favor as to have a swell newcomer for an escort. Mandy returned two-bows-and-a-smile for each salute given her. When the last of the assembly had moved down the aisle to where Mandy was seated, an elderly lady lifted a heavy dark veil over her bonnet, and looking over her gold-bowed spectacles, said, “Ain’t this a s’prise; why, how d’do, Mandy?” The smack which the old lady gave her niece sounded like the explosion of a tubular boiler. Mandy said, “I’m so glad to see you, Aunt Hannah; let me introduce you to my friend, Mr. Glidden.”

“I’ve hearn my husband, Deacon Squirm, speak of you, Mr. Glidden, and I’m reale glad to see you. Come right over to the house and spend a while,” said the pleased aunt.

They accompanied the old lady to the house, and later the deacon arrived and seemed very gracious and pleased to find such distinguished visitors. He kissed Mandy and extended a very cordial greeting to Ike.

Mrs. Squirm bubbling over with delight, on account of this unexpected call from her favorite niece with such a popular man for a beau, said, "Suppose you've heard tell of my blueberry wine; folks tell me my reputation for making this delicious drink has spread clear away down to Monsapee, and I've brought you a glass of it." She at the same time informed him that it was not intoxicating, and that she would not offend him by offering it if she had the least idea that it would fuddle his head. Ike drank freely — before he left he had taken the third tumblerful — and assured the old lady it was the best beverage he ever tasted, and advised the deacon to have her bottle some of it and put it on the market. "Lor's sake," said the deacon's wife, "they'd think 'cause it's wine it's intoxicatin', but that's only the name of it; I am afraid they'd have me up for sellin' spirits afore Squire Blunt, and I'd have to get you to get me clear. No; I guess we'd better not try it."

Ike suggested that they label it blueberry bitters, and put it up under the name "Squirm's Blueberry Bitters," and as it must have great medicinal properties it would be sought by invalids and people in need of a natural tonic, and of course would be in great demand and be a legitimate and an honorable business. Ike's advice then, and at other times when he called there with Mandy during the next few weeks, induced them to procure some bottles with labels which read as follows:

SQUIRM'S BLUEBERRY BITTERS

(NON-ALCOHOLIC)

Is highly recommended for indigestion and all liver and stomach troubles.

Dose: A wineglassful three times a day.

PUT UP BY JONATHAN SQUIRM, SQUIRMTOWN, MAINE.

They filled four dozen pint-bottles with this celebrated decoction, affixed the neat and legalized labels on them; and the deacon started for Tunkfield with the entire stock, intending to make a house-to-house canvass for sales among those in need of something for "that tired feeling," or for a generous appetizer. When he had driven about four miles from home he met a bunch of railroad laborers on their way to their tent to get dinner, and he said to one of them, "Want any bitters?"

"Bitters!" responded the astonished laborer, "why that is what we have been looking for, for more than a week; how much is it?"

"Fifty cents a bottle," answered the deacon.

"I'll have one," said about a dozen voices in chorus, as each of them seemed to be determined on securing some of it.

"We haven't any money," thoughtfully suggested one of the jubilant gang, "and you'll have to come down to the camp, so we'll get the boss to settle with you."

"That's so," said another, "turn around the drive down with us."

The principal spokesman of the group of workmen asked the privilege of tasting it before they bought any,

to which request the deacon very willingly consented; the deacon uncorked the bottle, handed it to the spokesman, who held the bottle to his mouth, drank freely of its contents, and when he took the bottle down and caught his breath, said, "Tastes good, I should say it's O. K."

Then one of the men who was from the South, and not familiar with the ways of this section, in an inquiring tone and evidently somewhat alarmed that it might not be the *real* article, said, "What does this 'non-alcoholic' on the label mean?"

"Oh, that's nothin', so long as it's non-combustible," answered a fellow who originally came from Nova Scotia, but who had drank sufficient "split," "Jamaica ginger," and the standard brands of "bitters," since he came to Maine, to have learned to pay little or no attention to the phraseology of the label on any bottle that was said to contain stimulants.

When they reached the tent the deacon very quickly disposed of his four dozen bottles, and at the request of the workmen received from the boss a written order on the contractor, whose office and headquarters were located at Blueberry Falls, for twenty-four dollars.

The order was accepted and cashed by the contractor, and the event of having the extraordinary sum of twenty-four dollars in his pocket, all at the same time, made the deacon feel rich enough to build a railroad himself, for he had not been accustomed to handling money in such large amounts since the old lumbering days. He lost no time in his haste to inform Ike of the phenomenal success in the disposal of his stock of bitters; and when

he told how much money he had made "all in a day," Ike said, "Didn't I tell you that a lot of such medicine could be sold?" Half laughing and half in fun, but with sincere earnestness, Ike continued, "I tell you that there is a chance to get rich in that business if it's only *pushed*. Why, that recipe of Mrs. Squirm's is worth a fortune. Go home and put up another supply and keep a-goin'." The deacon went home, and when he and his wife got through congratulating themselves on the success of their venture, they prepared another supply, which was also sold to the railway laborers. With all the efforts of his wife, assisted by some of the neighbors, it was utterly impossible to put up the bitters as rapidly as the deacon could find sale for them. A person not familiar with the customs and practices usually in vogue in a prohibitory State might naturally suppose that there must have been a scourge or epidemic existing there to cause the people to consume so much bitters. However, some may have already surmised that the bitter trade was a traffic that prospered by reason of the strict enforcement of the liquor laws.

The wisdom of the deacon and his wife was good in everything but in business matters. The old lady was so elated over their unexpected good fortune in the bitter trade that she boasted to one of her lady friends about such a simple thing paying such a liberal profit.

"Bless yer life, it's s'prisin' how easy 'tis made. I found the recipe in Mrs. Highbred's twenty-five cent Cook Book, and when I fust made it, used to put in a few extras. But found it cost more to put in the extras, and it didn't sell any quicker, so the deacon and me

decided to just put it up accordin' to the plain recipe, and it sells just as well and pays a tremendous profit. B'tween you and me, if nothin' happens, the deacon will soon be richer than Squire Blunt." This little boast to her friend (little thinking that anybody around there would ever have a copy of the famous Cook Book) was sufficient; within a week every book store in the county was over-run with customers from Squirmtown, each inquiring for cook books. In some cases the patrons were so eager that they could not remember the name of the celebrated author, and selected such cook books as they found on sale. The result was that every family in the village became the proud owner of one or more copies of some renowned work on culinary dishes and fruit flavors, but none of which contained the blueberry-wine formula. About the time a vigorous search was being made for a copy of Mrs. Highbred's twenty-five cent Cook Book, Mrs. Giles found one which her grandmother used to have; the Gileses being related to about every other family in the village this precious copy, found in the attic, was triumphantly exhibited about from family to family, and as it passed along each housewife made note of the blueberry-wine formula. At once the deacon began to have competition in the bitter business, The old saw that "competition is the life of trade" was verified; for it seemed the more that went into the business the sharper the rivalry, and the more that was being offered for sale the more popular the bitters became and the greater was the demand for them.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BED OF NETTLES.

TIM CRONIN was an only son, and lived with his aged father and mother on a small farm in the outskirts of Monsapee. Tim's father and Dennis Bogan were born in the same parish in Ireland, and of course their families were on terms of close intimacy since their immigration to this country. In their younger days they were accustomed to make frequent visits to each other's homes and enjoy a day or two in narrating reminiscences of the old country. When Tim grew to man's estate he became tired of the monotony of their quiet home, and for diversion he sometimes spent a few days with the old friends of his parents, and usually called Dennis "uncle."

For a few years Tim labored during the winter at lumbering, and in the berry season drove a team for Dennis Bogan, hauling berries from the plains to the factories. Being a light-hearted, happy-go-lucky sort of a lad he became very popular with the people at the Falls, and particularly with the young ladies whom he met at the village dances, because he was an excellent dancer and was considered the best waltzer in that section of the country.

Mrs. Bogan was very proud of Tim's popularity and would often say, "Ah, faith, an' Tim's a fine b'y, God

bless him ! ” whenever any of her callers spoke of him ; when they would tell her of his having so many girls and being such a favorite, she would say, “ Shure, an’ ain’t he foine-lookin’, an’ it’s no wonder they’re all afther him.”

Tim’s popularity, as in the case of a great many other good young men, was an injury to him and soon led to dissipation, which course continued until he began to exhibit real signs of intoxication and to occasionally be heavily under its influence even in the home of his parents.

Dennis, having always lived a temperate life, was very much opposed to the use of liquor, and objected to Tim’s coming there any more while under its influence, but Mrs. Bogan said he was a decent boy, and if he did sometimes take too much, he would always have a welcome at her house. So Dennis had to yield to her ; and the extreme kindness of Mrs. Bogan having only a tendency to increase Tim’s recklessness, he continued to go there in a stupid condition more frequently than formerly.

One day Ame Blimmers was at Bogan’s making some repairs on their comfortable little house, and in his usual gossipy style he commenced an acquaintance with Mrs. Bogan by telling her the news that was going the rounds of the village. He told her that “ Tim Cronin was drunker’n four barrels of rum t’other night, and staggered up against Ansel Hicks. Ansel is so put out about it that he was a-goin’ to have him taken up, only some o’ ther boys talked him out o’ ther notion o’ it.”

“ The spalpeen ! ” says Dennis, “ he’ll never stay an-

other night in my house. He's a disgrace to the whole race of Cronins from Tipperary."

"An' shure an' don't yer be a-believin' the half of what yer hear about the poor boy. Shure an' he niver did harm to no one. He will come here an' he will have a cordial welcome, as me'n his mother's been frinds this forty year," said Mrs. Bogan.

When Ame found that the fresh bit of news just offered was not received with good relish by Mrs. Bogan, he decided to smooth it over somewhat and said, "I don't know as it's 'zactly true, 'cause I didn't see it myself. Some one said Ansel Hicks told it, but then yer can't tell but what some one made it up fer the fun of it."

"Anse Hicks!" said Mrs. Bogan, apparently much chagrined at the report in circulation about Tim, "who'd be afthur believin' Ansel Hicks? shure an' he's nothin' but a church member."

Ame, in an apologetic way for having attempted to slander her friend, said, "Well, I know Tim, and he's an almighty good fellow, an' I don't believe half o' what's said about his drinkin.' Yer know that they say they sell a little sometimes at Sampson's tavern, an' 'cause he's there a good deal, perhaps that's where they got the notion about his drinkin.' Guess he don't drink half so much as those what talks 'bout him."

"Indeed, an' that's so," said Dennis, and his wife was apparently somewhat consoled by Ame's last remark, and felt that perhaps they were the only people who had seen Tim in a really stupid condition.

Ame's effort to soothe the feelings of the old couple was so successful he was encouraged to proceed. "They

say down town that Tim's a-goin' ter marry Delia Pinkham, but then they probably think 'cause he's up 'round Squirmtown so much and stops at her folks' tavern that he's after Delia. I think myself that Squire Blunt's darter's about as much in love with him as she kin be, and if he marries any he'll probably take her, 'cause yer know the squire's got Gov'ment bonds."

"Tim Cronin marry Squire Blunt's darter! shure an' if he's a-goin' ter do that, I want ter know it," said Mrs. Bogan.

Ame, thinking from what she said that it was an exclamation of joy at the news of Tim's brilliant prospects of marrying a charming young lady with a rich father, said in response to her question, "Yes, Mrs. Bogan, they tell me it is a fact that Tim is a-goin' ter marry the Squire's darter."

"Tha tinker!" said Dennis.

"Tha Yankee! an' he's goin' ter disgrace the whole of us by gettin' married to one of those Yankee girls. He'll niver come to my house again, and that's what Delia Pinkham's been a-comin' here fer, ter git Tim, and thin, worst of all, him a-goin' ter marry the Squire's darter. Shure an' the squire's a souper, and how the divil can Tim ever larn her ther prayers; Tim Cronin will niver stay another night in my house. Faith, an' I'll see the praist, and put a stop to it," said Mrs. Bogan.

"Faith, an' he's not the one," said Dennis.

"An' who will it be?" asked his wife.

"An' don't the squire marry people? ain't he the one that do be afthur marryin' thim?"

“Bad luck to you, Tim Cronin, and it’s disgrace you’ll bring on us all by turning with the Yankees?” cried Mrs. Bogan.

“Yes,” said Dennis, “won’t he look nice in their meetin’s, helpin’ thim ter sing ther songs.”

As a matter of fact the squire’s daughter was not allowed to be seen in Tim’s company, and the story of her engagement to him was a pure fabrication on the part of Ame, just to add comfort to Mrs. Bogan’s over-estimated opinion of the son of her friend. And when Ame found his fancied success in cheering Dennis and his wife proved such an inflaming blunder, he decided to finish his job in silence, and as soon as possible make his escape from the house without having them turn any of their wrath on him. His tittle-tattle and small story telling had evidently gotten him into a bed of nettles this time, and it looked as though he might be stung by a hornet before he left the house. In a short time he called, “There, Dennis, that’s fixed, and guess I’m done,” and began picking up his tools preparatory to leaving the house. Dennis asked for the amount of his bill, in order to pay it immediately; but Ame put the box of tools on his shoulder and sneaked out, saying, “Never mind now, Dennis; you kin pay me some day when you see me down town.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BLUEBERRY PLAINS.

AND now came the season when the people of the district had gone on their annual berry-picking expedition. Ike became curious to see the plains, and learn about the life and work of the pickers. The information received from those familiar with the work created in him a desire to know the real character of this great industry. Going to his stable he said to the hostler, "Zeke, ever been up on the plains or barrens as some of the people call them?"

"Yes, sir, I've been all over that section of the country," answered Zeke.

"Well, after dinner harness Maggie Murphy and Rattler, and we'll take a drive up there."

The day was one of the hottest of the season, and after driving a few miles the horses began to warm up considerably, so they slacked speed and drove more leisurely. It was a long drive and nearly sunset when they reached the plains.

The Barrens constitute the most remarkable feature of the Pine Tree State. They are located on an elevated ridge or plateau, comprise a territory of more than two hundred square miles, and on the dead level sweep away and away to the horizon. This peculiar tract of land is nearly destitute of trees, but it is entirely

covered with wild blueberry bushes. Blueberries grow in abundance, and the yield of this vast vineyard is one of the most prolific in America. The berries are picked and sold, and for a number of years have been the source of profitable employment to the laboring class during the summer season.

The pickers as a rule are a merry, sun-burned crowd, industriously filling their baskets with berries and singing scraps of song and old-time melodies.

During the berry season two thousand people, including men, women and children, are usually scattered over this vast area, and they include not only the very poor people of the neighboring towns, but also comfortably well off and respectable families, who seek health and recreation in this class of work, which beside affording them an annual outing, yields a very satisfactory income. It is an eminently picturesque manner of earning a livelihood. An average picker may earn two dollars a day, but good pickers can nearly double that amount. The families bring with them little baggage; a few crude utensils for cooking, and odds and ends of bedding comprise the camp furnishings. They usually select a site for their tents where they have convenient access to wood and water.

The work of measuring and boxing the berries during the evening has a tendency to break the monotony of the day's work, — picking.

As the shades of evening settle down a few dry pieces of rough wood are thrown upon the fire, and the children bivouac in the glitter of the flames, while the other class sit around the fire and entertain each other with ghost

stories, anecdotes of horse trades, fortune-telling, and in planning for the county fair.

To Ike the landscape assumed a charming and romantic aspect. He was now, as it seemed, in the center of a boundless sea of billowy purple, the horizon only broken here and there by the gaunt and blackened skeleton of a gigantic spruce tree, a former monarch of the forest, or the straggling bunches of hardy evergreen trees, which the fire had failed to exterminate in its wild rush through the forest that once stood so dense and majestic.

Here and there, at intervals throughout the broad expanse, the scene was dotted by the white tents and the covered wagons of the berry pickers. As Ike gazed upon it in the glow of the setting sun, the scene appealed to him as one of overpowering majesty and grandeur. As they drove along by a group of berry pickers in front of a camp, Ike stopped his horses and inquired in which direction the tent of Eben Moody was situated. While talking with one of the group Ike overheard a man in the camp say, "There's that Glidden. What's that scoundrel doing up here? S'pose he's up here to cheat somebody if he gets the chance." Then another voice was heard to say, "S'pose we get even with him; never'd have a better chance."

"What is the matter with you people?" said Ike, "haven't I always treated you on the square?" There was some unintelligible muttering in response to Ike's question, which seemed to raise his ire, and he said as he drove off, "I'd do right if I should thrash the whole gang of you."

"I'm 'fraid you've got yourself into trouble," said Zeke. "That was Bluster Rankin and Lickety Billins makin' that talk; they won't dare to 'tack you openly, but they'll lay fer ye and try ter do ye some harm."

"Yes, I knew who they were. I recognized their voices. They would not dare face me and make that talk. I'll teach them or anybody else to make such insinuations against my honor."

Ike was pleased when he arrived at the Moody tent. Eben came out and gave him a cordial greeting, and extended an invitation to Ike to tent with him and his party, which invitation was gladly accepted. Ike became interested in the scene, and at once made himself one of the party. The tent was near the bank of a clear stream, where a member of the party had been fishing that day and succeeded in catching a nice string of speckled beauties. While Eben was dressing the trout, Ike assisted others to build the fire, peel potatoes, and to get the pots and kettles boiling. When the trout were broiled, eggs cooked, the tea brewed, and everything arranged, they sat down to a bountiful supper and ate heartily.

Supper over, and the horses properly groomed and cared for, they grouped about the firelight of the blazing logs, to watch the flickering flames and to revel in the moonlight. As soon as the shades of night began to gather parties from other tents assembled with them to unite in entertaining the distinguished visitor, and Ike's delight may be imagined when he saw Mandy among the number.

Eben felt that he was the host and was responsible

for the proper amusement of his guest, but was uncertain as to the etiquette of a host under these circumstances. However, if it was really his duty to take the lead and be toast master, he decided to perform the functions of that station by relating an experience of a man named Tillson, who had made a visit to the blueberry district for scientific research. He knew that Lige Hopkins, who had more of the natural gifts as an entertainer than any other member of the party, would be apt to follow with some of his characteristic yarns.

Eben, lighting his pipe, puffed to get it going well, then blowing the smoke to one side wiped his mouth and began.

"Mr. Glidden, I suppose you have met Henry Billins; he's the same feller we call "Lickety"?"

"Oh, yes," said Ike, "I am well acquainted with that gentleman."

"There was a man named Tillson sent down here by the aggregultral deepartmint in Washington," continued Eben, "to make a study of the blueberry plant; he was a grate book-lairn't chap, wrote po'try, had traveled all over Oklehomy, Mizzoory, Eurrop and Nebrasky, could talk pol'tics or anything. He wanted to hire a man with a team ter carry him round, so he'd get an idee o' the berry bizziness an' write it up. There didn't hap'n ter be any o' the boys home from river drivin', so I interduced Hen, an' he named him "Lickety"; 'cause when he's a-walkin' he goes lickety split, and when he's a-ridin' he's allus lickin' his hoss, an' it's cu'rus how the name stuck ter him."

"Yes," responded Ike, "I think the name just fitted

him; I should call it a very appropriate name for him."

"He must er been a grate learnt man, 'cause while he was here he found out all about the blueberries, and when he was a-goin' away he gave us pints about burnin' the land to clear off the scrub that we never tho't of afore. No wonder he knowed so much; why, he had a book he called a dickshunary so big I cou'd scurcelly lift it, and he had a lot o' them ensiklopeedies and hist'ries, an' a grate big jogafy, what 'ud tell you all about Alasky an' ther Pillipeens. An' he had an argyment on any subject."

"How did he like this section of the country?" inquired Ike.

"Oh, he thought it was spl'n'did, only the popilla-shun warn't so much as he 'spected to find. 'Tany rate, he boarded at Widder Spencer's, and they had lots o' company, strawberry fest'vals at the meetin'-house, hay-rack rides, an' he enjoyed his visit treemenjous. He sent me this air pipe fer a Crismus present, winter after he wuz down. But I wuz kind o' sorry about the send-off he got when he wuz leavin'."

"So he staid at Mrs. Spencer's, did he?" queried Ike.

"Yes, they sed he give her lot o' 'tention when they wuz at ther soci'bles, and seemed to like her putty well, but then she's got good lot o' common sense, and don't think she'd take up with any stranger, onless she knowed a good deal 'bout him," responded Eben.

"How about the send-off that you referred to?" asked Ike.

“When he was about to go back to Washington, thought he’d like to go by steamboat, soze ter see Bar Harbor, and git a glimpse at ther coast, an’ he engaged Lickety ter drive him ter Ripley, where ther steamboat lands. They left here after supper s’peetin ter git there ’bout nine o’clock in the evenin’, and when they left here Lickety’s horse trotted off as though his jintz wuz limber as an eel, and seemed ter pull a little on the bit, if anything. When they’d got within ’bout five miles o’ Ripley ther horse stopped, put back his ears, and tried ter round himself round in a heap, snorted, and began ter grunt. Then he started up on a trot and broke inter a run; they were on a down grade, and the horse seemed to have been taken wild all of a suddin, shivered, jerked himself backwards, rolled over sideways and fell, breakin’ both shafts right square off.”

“What was the matter with the horse?” queried Ike.

“’Twas an ole’ trader what ’ud been ’round here long time, and was subject ter staggers; Lickety oughter knowed better’n ter took a gen’leman ter ride with such a hoss.”

“Oh, the blind staggers,” said Ike; “how did they get to Ripley?”

“When the horse fell Lickety got onter his head, and Tillson tried ter help get ther hoss loosened from ther harness. Fin’lly ther hoss cum to, and when he did they were all tangled up with ther gear and ther tugs and ther reins. ’Twas dark, and when he riz his heels he kicked Lickety in the leg with such force that he was lame for a month. Howsumever, when they got

out of their mess it was near mornin', and Tillson found that his hand was cut and his side was badly bruised. Lickety offered to get 'nother waggin and drive him down, but he declined. He walked the rest o' ther way, and engaged a livery man ter drive out to where Lickety was and get his trunk and things. When he got ter Ripley he wuz pretty badly beat out, an' I guess he must have swore sum' 'bout that blamed hoss Lickety had."

"That must have been a very disagreeable experience," remarked Ike.

"Yes, when I heard 'bout it I got Ansel Hicks ter rite a letter ter him fer me, an' sort er apolergized fer Lickety; an' he rit back that 'twas all right, he liked down here and enjoyed the hull six weeks while here, and when he cum agin would stay six months."

"What did Lickety have to say about the breakdown with the horse that had the staggers?" asked Ike.

"Didn't say nothin' 'bout it. Next day I went over to their house, saw Lickety was bolstered up in a rock-in'-chair and his left leg on a cushioned box, and I sed, 'What's ther matter?' He laughed and sed, 'That's ruther pussonel.' Then I asked how he got to Ripley, and he sed fust-rate. So we never suspected nuthin' until word cum up from Ripley, and then ther boys had fun with Lickety."

While Eben had been exerting himself with the narrative about the experience of the man from Washington, Lige was very fidgety until there was a lull. He wished for a chance to tell a story, as he knew it was

always expected that he must be prepared to take his part at a gathering like this.

"That Lickety thinks he's a horse-jockey," said Lige, "but I calc'late he's got the wust o' it more times'n yer hear of. He had a horse what had been half starved and sufferin' with old age, and fixed it up fer a trader. He groomed an brushed that hoss with the greatest care, bathed ther stiff jints with lin'ment, filed his teeth so his grinders come tergether like a colt's, an' in a few weeks the old hoss picked up soze's yer wouldn't a known him. So one day Lickety druv his trader, all patched up an' lookin' like a bran' new hoss, over ter Ben Duncan's, ter get up a swap. He knew Ben had a likin' fer a taste o' the ardent, and he took a bottle o' sp'rits with him. When he and Ben talked a while 'bout the weather an' ther news in ginerol, then Lickety treated. Ben, not s'pectin' what Lickety was up to, tuk a pretty good swaller; then Lickety began to brag up ther ol' hoss. Ben's mighty p'lite yer know, an' bein's Lickety was so lib'ral ter call an' treat, he re'dly acknowledg'd the good pints o' the ol' hoss Lickety was a-tellin' 'bout. Ben seemed so onsospectin' an' gettin' so fav'ribly 'mpressed with the old hoss that Lickety thought 'bout time ter treat again. They tuk 'nother drink. Lickety then struck Ben to trade; Ben had a nice, smooth, slick mare, what wuz trappy and smart as a colt on the road. Ben didn't say he wouldn't trade. Lickety got ter puffin' up his ole hoss, soze you'd a thought it was the Millbridge Racker. Every once 'n a while they'd take a drink, an' Lickety thought after each draught they tuk that Ben wuz more inclined ter

trade. As the day waned an' ther whiskey became low, the anxiety and braggin' o' Lickety increased. When ther bottle was presented ter Ben, with only one more drink in it, he took in, looked at the ol' hoss fer a few minits, then put ther bottle to his lips and drained it ter ther bottom. When he tuk ther bottle from his mouth he stud and waited ter get his breath. Lickety was still busy and waxin' eloquent on the good qual'ties o' his trader. When Ben got his breath agin soze ter speak, he said, 'Look a here, Lickety, you needn't think I don't b'lieve he's some good pints, 'cause I've knowed him ever since he was a colt. Deacon Squirm owned him once, an' he was counted a dinged good ol' hoss then, and that must a ben twenty-five year ago. If you had a colt leetle heav'er than my mare, darned if I wouldn't be tempted ter trade with yer.' When Lickety found he had been outwitted, he was in a dreadful hurry ter get ter the post-office ter mail a letter and druv off."

"Ben evidently knew the old horse," said Ike.

"Oh, yes," answered Lige, "when one o' these ol' traders once sees a hoss, an' learns his hist'ry, he will allus know that hoss, no matter where he sees 'im."

By the time they had told all the details and laughable incidents of every horse trade that had been made in the district within their memory, the fire burned low, the party broke up, and the visiting members returned to their respective tents. Zeke and Eben went out to look after the horses that were tethered to see that they were safe and free from danger of being cast, and then returned to their quarters and lay down to rest, where they were hushed to sleep by the buzzing night flies so

familiar to those who have enjoyed the rude canopies of the pleasure camp in the summer playgrounds of Maine.

When the party broke up Ike quickly found his way to Mandy Garland's side and volunteered to accompany her to her mother's tent. Several others were going in the same direction. Ike and Mandy walked together somewhat apart from the others under the soft light of the full moon, with all the romance of the silent plains sweetly appealing to them. They found Mrs. Garland seated at the door of her tent, admiring the beauty of the moonlight shimmering on the surface of the stream. She gave Ike a cordial greeting, and they sat there for some time, absorbing the novelty of their surroundings. Over the whole broad expanse there was peace in the awesome silence of the night, broken only by the dreamy call of the night birds, the lapping of the stream as it flowed over its gravelly bed, and off in a distant tent the sound of some youthful camper giving expression to his appreciation of a freedom that is enjoyed only at the cost of performing some duty. The words came more clearly to the listeners as they sat, and caused them much merriment as the singer's feelings were expressed in the following words:

Goin' berryin' ain't so bad
'F it keeps you out o' school,
I'd rather tramp the berry patch
Than study double rule

Of three or some such foolish thing.
But my! it makes me mad
When right in vacation time
Ma sings out or dad:

“Johnny, berries gettin’ ripe ;
Just take a pail and chase
Yourself up ’crost the pasture lot
To that old ‘foller’ place,

’Nd pick enough to make some pies.”
Why don’t they send me out
Along the meadow brook to catch
A nice big mess of trout?

The’ ain’t no sport in gettin’ scratched
All up with berry briars,
Why don’t a feller’s pa and ma
Know better what he d’sires?

Fish is jes’ as good to eat
As any berry pie ;
’F I go berryin’ any more
’N vacation, I’ll know why.

The moon began to sink, and darkness suggested that it was time to rest before the morning labors began. Ike said “Good-night” and started back to Eben’s. But the novelty of the plains induced him to continue his ramble along the brook till he came to a clump of alders near the edge of the stream. Darkness by this time pervaded the surroundings, especially at this spot. Ike had scarcely passed the center of the thicket of alders when he received a blow that felled him to the earth, and in an instant his body was assailed with a shower of blows and kicks. He struggled to his feet despite the vigorous attack of his assailants, but it was going hard with him. Loud cries resounded in the air, “Grab his legs!” “Club him!” “We’ll teach you, Shyster Glidden, to pick a fuss!” and again Ike was felled

to the earth, his throat was held in a vice-like grip by one of the miscreants while the others continued to beat and kick him.

Suddenly there was a crashing and tearing among the berry bushes, and a whoop resounded that would put a Penobscot warrior to the blush, and the burly form of Tim Cronin burst through the thicket, his arms going like piston rods. He laid about him with such effect that three of Ike's assailants went down before them and the others fled. Ike rose quickly to his feet and grasped the hand of his deliverer. "I don't know who you are, but I thank you, nevertheless, for your prompt assistance. Were it not for your timely arrival I think those rascals would have finished me," said Ike.

"Well, I know you," said Tim, "and glad I am that I was here to help the friend of Dennis Bogan, me uncle. I'm me uncle's neffy, and I'm a friend to his friends every time," responded Tim. "I overheard the rascals planning to do the job; but I didn't think they meant to do it this night, so when I heard the noise it all come to me, and I threw off my blanket and rushed out to your rescue."

CHAPTER XV.

THE TWENTY-DOLLAR LOAN.

LIKE drove back to town the next morning, passing the long procession of wagons loaded with berries bound for the thriving factories of Squirmtown. His thoughts were of Mandy Garland. He had made an effort to see her before leaving the plains, but she was far afield among the multitude of pickers, and he wondered much that she would take herself away without bidding him an adieu. He had led himself to think that Mandy had entertained a feeling of interest toward him, but this action on her part led him to believe that she was indifferent to his company.

When he entered the town he found Ansel Hicks and Dennis Bogan engaged in a heated altercation in regard to the importance of St. Patrick's Day as a holiday. Their dispute took a wide range, but their disagreement in regard to the ancestry of the President nearly ended in a row with hand-to-face blows. Dennis claimed that the President was a full-fledged Irishman, and said to Ansel, "You are like all the rest of the Yankees, with their knowledge of presidents and patri'sm, until there is war. Yer niver fired a gun, an' don't know the first article of the Constitution. Shure, an' it's us that cum from the ould counthry that saved the Union." The crowd cheered Dennis, while Ansel walked away,

declaring that he preferred to talk with "educated people."

"Get into the carriage with me; I want to talk with you," said Ike.

"Who is this Tim Cronin?" he asked.

"Oho, he wuz a fine boy once before the drink got a hold on him," answered Dennis.

Dennis told all about Tim's good qualities, and of his unfortunate habit of drinking, and then Ike related the stirring events of the night before and of Tim's heroic part in it. Dennis was very much gratified when he heard of the splendid performance of his beloved nephew. "Oh, he'd be a noble boy if it wuzn't for the likker," said Dennis sadly. "But how can you expect to fight the thirst for rum in a community where the best people go mad in their condemnashun of the likker traffic, and look up their law books with prohibitory acts, while at the same time these same people, from the deacons down, think it not beneath them to make money by turning the blessed fruit that God gave them into likker that draws away men's senses, and peddle it out to the poor misguided drunkards under the false name of bitters and tonics. Thank heavens, I never took a drink of no likker of any kind since I landed in Ameriky, and I niver saw such drinkiness until I came to a State where it is a great crime to sell it."

"There is much truth in what you have said, Dennis, but I am of the opinion that there is good in Tim, and firmly believe that there's enough in him yet to become a whole man again and a man to be proud of."

"I am glad to hear you say that, Lawyer Glidden,"

said Dennis with a sigh. "How proud 'twould make us if we could only see him take a new turn for the better."

Soon after Ike returned to his office a young man called, who had evidently been drinking.

"That was a close corner those fellers had you in when I got around," said the caller.

Ike looked at him sharply, and recognized the same person whom he met in the darkness of the night previous. "Hello, is this the fellow who saved my life?" asked Ike in a tone of gratitude.

"Yes, I'm the chap what give it to Lickety under the ear," proudly responded the caller.

"So, this is you, Tim; I'm mighty glad to make your acquaintance, and you cannot fully realize how much I appreciate the service you rendered me last night. Tim, I shall always remember you, and if I ever can give you a compliment or extend a favor it will be done," said Ike.

"Never mind that, Lawyer Glidden; I'm just tellin' you to keep yer eye on the watch for them chaps," said Tim.

"Thought I left you on the plains? It's a surprise to see you here? Glad to see you anyhow," said Ike.

"Oh, there's to be a dance here to-night, and you know I always like to be at the dances. I was on one of them loaded teams you passed," answered Tim.

"Is that so? I did not notice you; but then I don't know as I'd really know you anyway, if you hadn't referred to the encounter we had with Bluster and Lickety," said Ike.

When Tim left the office Ike said to himself, "That's a noble fellow, and I like his frank, open, honest countenance. I am going to try and straighten him out."

From that time on he and Tim were great friends.

But Tim was rapidly becoming more indolent, even neglecting home and parents, and seldom was content to remain in the quiet of their humble abode, unless he went there to recuperate from the effects of a spree in town. The amount of his earnings grew less, and finally he became an habitual borrower from his friends of money with which to purchase liquor to satisfy the unceasing hankering he had acquired for it.

He had become a street loafer and spent the most of his time in lounging around the stores. Ike took a friendly interest in him, and urged him to mend his ways, by saying to him, "You might be somebody if you'd only let rum alone."

Ike's attempt to reform him seemed fruitless, as it appeared to be of no use to advise or try to encourage him. The only redeeming feature left in his shattered character was that he was perfectly honest, and took pride in returning the amount of those small loans he had taken as soon as he could earn the money. While his acquaintances felt perfectly safe in accommodating him with small loans they began to refuse his demands for favors of this kind, because they knew he would spend the money for liquor, and he was often obliged to resort to a subterfuge of a harmless nature to secure a temporary loan. One day he went into Ike's office and said, "Ike, I want ter borrow twenty dollars."

"What in the world do you want of that much money?" said Ike in apparent surprise.

"Me father is dead," said Tim, "and I suppose I'll need so much money ter bury him."

"Your father is dead!" said Ike very pathetically, "I'm awfully sorry to hear such sad news, Tim," and opening his wallet continued, "Here, Tim, is twenty dollars, and if there is any other favor I can do for you under the circumstances just let me know."

Tim's father was not dead, but for several weeks had been in a feeble condition; Tim took the money, and started for the city of Deblois on an old-fashioned bencher, and did not return home until the last cent was gone. Not being acquainted with anybody in the vicinity of Tim's home, and Tim leaving town at once, Ike heard no more about the Cronins, and supposed all the time that Tim's father was really dead until about three weeks afterward (when the old man did die) Tim went into the harness room in the corner of Ike's stable, sat down beside the fire, and for some time remained silent there with bowed head. This seeming to Ike to be exceedingly strange in the loquacious Tim, he said, "What's the matter, Tim? you seem to be in deep thought this morning."

"Nawthin's the matter, but I'd like the lend of twenty dollars if yer plase," answered Tim rather meekly and shyly.

"Twenty dollars!" said Ike, "Why you owe me that much already; what in the Old Harry do you want money for now? I can't let you have any more money."

"Now, Ike," said Tim in a crest-fallen tone, "'Twouldn't be askin' it, only I need it the worst'n I ever did in my life."

"You need money! what use can you have for so much money?" said Ike in his good-natured way, as he was stepping into his carriage with the intention to drive off.

"Hold on, Ike," said Tim in a hurried and pleading way, "shure an' me father is dead, an' I suppose I'll have ter bury him, and divil a cent have I got. Wouldn't you do a favor, Ike, and help me in my heap o' trouble?"

"Your father dead!" said Ike in amazement, "why I thought your father died three weeks ago; didn't I give you twenty dollars then to bury him? what became of that money?"

"Never mind, Ike," said Tim excitedly, "'pon my word he's surely dead this time."

It is needless to say that his appeal went to Ike's heart, and as soon as he obtained sufficient information to satisfy him that Tim's father was really dead this time, he let him have the money.

CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. SQUIRM'S POPLIN DRESS.

DEACON SQUIRM soon learned that it would be absolutely necessary to procure supplies of bottles and boxes in larger quantities, and decided to visit the city and seek an alliance with a wholesale concern to supply him with the articles required in his rapidly growing bitter business. The preparations for making that seemingly great journey was an event that the whole neighborhood undoubtedly remember. To add to the confusion Mrs. Squirm was to accompany him and was in a state of hurry and bustle, having her wine-colored poplin dress made over and only two days' warning. Mrs. Squirm was really child-like in her excitement and anticipation of the trip. She at once sought the services of Martha Dearborn, the only dressmaker in the district, to aid in the enigma of converting her best dress into a form of the latest and most approved style. She called on Martha, and found her busy making a shroud for a woman that had just died, and was informed by Martha that if she could wait until after the funeral, she could then render the service required. This announcement by the dressmaker came like the last line of a destiny to Mrs. Squirm.

"How in all creation am I a-goin' ter git the deacon ter put off his trip until after the funeral. They're a hol-

lerin' fer more an' more bitters, an' he's out o' bottles, and must go day after termorrer," lamented Mrs. Squirm.

"Well, now, you know 'twould be sacriledge fer me ter not make this shroud, jest ter git you redly ter go pleasurin'. 'Tis a case o' duty. We must be benevolent," responded Martha.

"I don't know what I shall do there, d'yer think my poplin dress would look too much out o' style, if I should wear it jest as 'tis?" asked Mrs. Squirm.

"I'm 'fraid those trimmin's are jest a bit too noticeable, and it might not appear's well as you'd like. Now, there's Mandy Garland, your niece, she's very stylish, and I should think b'tween you and her that you could make it over without any other help," said Martha.

Such a suggestion had an encouraging effect on the old lady, who immediately sent for her favorite niece, Mandy, to come to her rescue and assist in her preparations for a trip to Bangor. The messenger soon returned with an answer that Mandy was at Deblois attending a Sunday-school Convention, and would not return for several days. The fates seemed to be against Mrs. Squirm in her endeavors to appear young and stylish.

The determination of Mrs. Squirm was commendable; the disappointments already met with had only a tendency to make her more resolute in her plans to have her best dress made stylish, and she decided to attempt the task herself with the assistance of only Katy Brown, her hired girl. They finally commenced the extensive operation, Mrs. Squirm's brain, eyes and hands busy

planning, superintending and arranging the reconstruction, and Katy with scissors in hand actively engaged ripping and cutting. When the ruffles and flounces had been ripped off the skirt, and the polonaise had been dissected into numerous sections, Mrs. Squirm tried to cut and readjust the parts together, but it seemed like a deep problem. She studied a fashion plate for a while, and then tried to apply the knowledge just acquired to changing the shape of the garment to the design of the illustration in the fashion book. After puzzling over the dubious task she and Katy were obliged to give up in despair. It was nearly noon, and she went to the bottling shed, declaring that this world is but a vale of tears.

"There," she said, as she commenced to vent her troubles to the deacon, "I've got my dress all ripped and took apart, and now I can't git it together agin fer ther life of me. Had I known yestiddy that Martha Dearborn couldn't fix over my dress until after ther fun'-ral, I'd a tuk the hoss and kerridge an' druv down to Monsapee an' got Sally Thrasher ter fixed it. Sal aknows how, 'cause she made over this same dress once afore; ther time I went ter ther reunion o' ther Smith family. That wuz centen'ial year, an' she's such a rusher 'twon't take her no time if I kin only git her."

"If yer say yer want ter go down I'll tell John ter hitch ther colt inter ther Concord waggin, and you can drive down and git Sal ter cum up and do yer sewin'," said the deacon in a very consoling accent. The colt was harnessed and brought around to the front-door steps, where the deacon was directing Katy to ride down

with Mrs. Squirm as far as the post-office and obtain his mail. Mrs. Squirm and Katy got into the wagon, and the colt started out with a fierce dash of speed. Holding the reins taut Mrs. Squirm said, "This air colt ain't been out fer a few days, an' is sort o' frisky, an' I'm a little onsteddy in my nerves, an' he seems to be a kinder waverin' in his notions, 'cause he knows it's me what's a-drivin'. He needs a stiddy bit an' a firm martin'gill ter drive 'im along straight, so ther deacon told John ter put this rig on him. You might a seen him a-caperin' when John led him out on the halter, he was prancin' an' a-dancin' on his hind legs, until he got him hitched inter this new bitin' gear an' overdraw."

When they were passing a gorgeously hued circus poster on a bill board along the roadside, the colt shied off sideways; the old lady struck him with the whip, and he sprang forward, stopped, snorted as if afraid, and naturally enough began to back a little. "G'lang! g'lang there! cried the old lady in a tone that indicated fear and excitement. The scene was nearing one of danger. She struck the colt again; he pricked up his ears, made several bounds in the air, shook his head and went away galloping. The old lady, her bonnet on the back of her head, holding on to the reins with a grip as if it was all for dear life, finally steadied the colt down to a nice, smooth, trotting clip and was sending it along with great speed.

"Takes me ter drive," she said; "when I was young I could drive's well's any man in the hull county."

The commotion of that little episode seemed to have something of an exhilarating effect on the old lady, and had a tendency to temper her pride as an expert driver.



MRS. SQUIRM, — “TAKES ME TER DRIVE. WHEN I WUZ YOUNG I COULD
DRIVE’S WELL’S ANY MAN IN THE HULL COUNTY”

The colt was jogging along at a fairly good clip, when a roan horse harnessed to a carriage came out from the driveway of a farmhouse and turned into the road just behind Mrs. Squirm's team. An attempt was made to drive past the old lady. She pulled upon the reins, clucked to the colt, gave him a gentle tap with the whip, and away he broke into a run, and seemed almost unmanageable. The colt galloped almost out of sight of the roan, leaving the dust behind rising in clouds like smoke, so that when the post-office was reached the old lady was almost overcome with the fatigue of holding on and the colt was thick with foam. Katy alighted and went into the post-office, and the old lady proceeded alone on her way to Monsapec. The colt by that time was not quite so fresh, and was easily driven the remainder of the distance, and the old lady was fully equal to the occasion of being its driver.

When she arrived at Miss Thrasher's she found that young lady over-run with work, and it was almost useless to try to persuade her to leave her home patrons to go so far away as Squirmtown to fulfil the services that Mrs. Squirm so earnestly solicited.

"Why, how dy'er do, Aunt Hannah Squirm?" was the greeting extended to the old lady.

"Well, Sall, I'm in a reg'lar heap o' trouble, an' I come down to fetch you up ter get me fixed up, so'st I can go ter Banger day after termorrer with the deacon," said Mrs. Squirm.

"Trouble! what kind of trouble? How can I help you then? I can't think of leaving home, with so many people waiting for their dresses," responded Sally.

"Bin disapp'inted, disapp'inted, egg'sackly what I might a 'spected. The story is rather 'stror'nary, but co'se I'll haf ter tell yer the hull on it 'fore you'll know what I want, I s'pose."

"Yes, tell me the whole story, Aunt Hannah, and then I may know how and what you need," said Sal eagerly, because she thought the old lady's story would include a choice bit of gossip.

Mrs. Squirm related the plan of the deacon to visit Bangor, and her predicament in trying to fix over the dress. A very little persuasion induced Miss Thrasher to leave her work, and accompany the old lady to Squirmtown. Mrs. Squirm evidently hurried the colt along on the return trip, as when she reached home that evening, the colt did not carry his head quite so high as when he left home, and showed some signs on his side where the old lady had lashed him with her whip in her hurry to reach home before dark.

On the next day Miss Thrasher easily performed the service that the old lady was so anxious should be done in an up-to-date manner. Before tea time the wine-colored poplin dress was reconstructed and gave indications of a garment made up in accordance with some modern plans and designs. During the day the deacon was extremely busy in perfecting his plans to leave home, and during the evening was approached by a prominent young man in town on the matter of selling him an interest in the business. The principal inducement for the deacon to receive him as a partner was that he had just graduated from a business college, and claimed to know how to do business "in a business-like manner."

But after spending two hours or more in conversation with the young man, the deacon finally gave him the answer,—“I know I hain’t ben ter no bizness college and don’t know much ’bout bizness in ginerel, but then I guess I know’s much ’bout this peertikler bizness as any o’ yer and won’t jine nobody with me yet ’while.”

During the evening Mrs. Squirm got out the deacon’s white shirt and collar, and hung them together with his clean underclothes on a chair near the fire in the kitchen, and when the deacon came in from the bottling shed, she said, “There, I guess you’ll find the wash-tub in the wood-shed, and there’s plenty warm water in the big kittle.” She evidently had made some preparations to assist the deacon in an heroic effort to take a bath before leaving home. Taking a bath in a country house is like taking Manilla. It requires such an endless amount of preparation that, when it is actually accomplished, one feels that a great victory has been won.

CHAPTER XVII.

SQUIRMTOWN HAS A BOOM.

THE success and growth of the blueberry-bitter industry proved a great factor in the development and prosperity of Squirmtown. In less than a year after Deacon Squirm ventured to sell bitters to the public twenty others entered into the same business, and each of the twenty apparently met with success. In speaking of the new and unique industry a prominent man said, "There is old man Spencer who had always been poor until he began to sell 'Spencer's IXL Bitters.' It is only a few months since he converted his carriage shed into a bottling house, and within that time he has bought a steel range, a parlor organ and lots of other things, and paid cash for them. There is Dan Giles, who used to drive an ox-team in the lumbering woods for twenty-five dollars a month. Now he stays home and seems to have plenty of money, and it is not long since he started in the business, utilizing the kitchen, dining-room and cellar of his house, and with the aid of his wife and four grown-up daughters prepared 'Giles' XXX Fruit Juice'; Ben Duncan, who erected a nice new building with the assistance of a dozen or more employed is busy making 'Duncan's Eureka Bitters'; The Hunt brothers occupying a new and spacious building, with all the boys and girls they can engage, busy

every day bottling and labelling ‘Hunt’s Wild-Berry Tonic,’ and sixteen others, each of them putting up his preparation under a name of his own choice and fancy; and the products of all the different concerns are prepared from the same blueberry-wine formula.”

The demand for help at the different bottling establishments induced families to move there from other towns, and the sight of hay-racks, loaded with second-hand furniture and household goods going in the direction of Squirmtown, might be seen almost any day on every road in the county. Each house accommodated some friend who came seeking employment, by renting one, two or perhaps three rooms until every inhabitable building in the village was overcrowded, and consequently there was a demand for more houses.

Some enterprising business men commenced to erect houses for their employees, and with this new and necessary move came an influx of carpenters, masons and other laborers. A demand for building sites induced owners of fields to remove the fences and to measure off large fields into house lots. Joe Sampson with the proceeds of his subscription bought the farm across the road from Deacon Squirm’s homestead, and opened his house to the public, putting up a sign in large letters, “Sampson’s Tavern.” Shops, stores and places for all kinds of business opened up, and almost each day the erection of a new building was begun for some trader who had heard of the remarkable growth of Squirmtown, and had come perhaps a long distance to embark there in trade and try his fortune in the suburb of Blueberry Falls. Each day brought its new characters, fakirs,

peddlers, schemers and promoters, and the village was overrun with fortune-seekers; there were all kinds and types of people among them, from the "capitalist," who wore a silk hat and carried a massive cane and proposed to construct an electric railway from the Falls out to Squirmtown, down to Armenian peddlers with push-carts and arm-baskets, who came all the way from Palestine for the sake of selling "\$1.00 worth of cotton laces for 10 cents," as they said; and from the steady and thrifty mechanic to the hobo laborer that is always ready to move to a new town, and who had cast his lot with the pioneers of every well advertised new place from Fort Payne to Millinockett.

About the time rumor had gone out into the world to herald the success of Deacon Squirm's new enterprise, an agent for a safe manufacturer put in an appearance for the purpose of selling him a safe. After congratulating the deacon on his prosperous business the agent complimented him by saying that, as he held the reputation of being a trusty man in the town, he must have many valuable papers belonging to others in his keeping for safety; besides it was generally understood he was threatened with extreme wealth from the sale of his celebrated bitters, and he reminded him that a man of his importance should certainly have a safe, and as his business was advancing with strides it would be economical to buy a large one to meet the requirements of an increasing business.

The reference to his trustworthiness brought the fact to the deacon's mind that he did have in his custody Dennis Bogan's pension certificate, Ame Blibber's insur-

ance policy, and Jim Norton's bond for a deed, and being susceptible to flattery he caught the hook, line and whole bait, and ordered one of the largest safes the agent was authorized to sell. In due time the safe arrived, and to get it upstairs in the deacon's newly made office was a problem. Finally a tackle was rigged, and brought down to the steps in front of the factory, and hooked into straps fastened around the safe, and a volunteer crew of small boys commenced to assist in the "yo-heave-ho business," while a large delegation of loafers came from the tavern to exercise general supervision. The safe was coaxed about quarter way up the stairs on a track of planks, when something gave way and down came the safe.

The crowd rushed out and barely escaped a serious accident. The safe lost a leg in the catastrophe, and further operations were suspended until the next day, when the deacon concluded to move his office downstairs, and then had the safe moved in on that floor.

However absurd it may seem this new acquisition gave the deacon an exalted rank in the community, and to his safe was intrusted for safe-keeping every form of security and document of value. In fact, without any intention on his part, the safe suddenly became the people's depository and safety vault.

When traffic in Squirmtown began to increase Joe Sampson's hotel patronage also increased, and his venture was fast developing into a genuine hotel business. With the house frequently full of guests Liza was obliged to employ an experienced girl to take charge of the dining hall, because Nina's services were required in the

culinary department. A council composed of Joe, Liza and Ike decided that the quickest method of securing an experienced waiter was to send to an employment agency in Bangor; communication was at once opened with the agency, and in the course of a few days a "girl" arrived. Rose Langtry was her name. Experienced? yes, she said; but time demonstrated that it could not have been true. When she entered upon the duties of serving dinner she attempted to be spry, and was hurrying things along at a lively rate, when one of the guests spoke up promptly, "Take care, waiter! You are putting your thumb in my soup."

"Oh, that's all right, sir! It ain't very warm," she replied.

In a short time Rose assumed control of the household, taking full charge of the business as well as of the house. She prepared, changed, placed and displaced everything according to her own great pleasure and without any interference. She was naturally smart, which of course had a tendency to improve the business of the hotel.

Liza thought herself extremely fortunate in securing this capable servant, as it gave her and Nina an opportunity to take a more prominent part in the social functions of the village. Liza joined the church, Joe purchasing at a bargain a pew in the meeting-house. The ladies of the church organized a Cemetery Improvement Society, and "elected Liza chairman of the 'ciety," which new responsibility had a tendency to take the landlady's attention from the home duties and to give Rose more sway in the management of the hotel.

During all this time Rose was doubly busy. In addition to running the hotel she had been making love to Bennie, Joe's only son, eighteen years old, and had made arrangements that they should be married immediately, without the knowledge of the folks. Bennie was so elated with the idea of entering into connubial bliss that he carefully kept the matter secret from his parents, lest they should bring his future plans to naught. One evening she told Bennie to get ready a team and that they would go down to Squire Blunt's and be united in matrimony. After the ceremony was performed Bennie, reaching to the bottom of his trousers pocket, said, "Squire, what's yer bill?" In response Squire Blunt said, "The law allows me two dollars, but you may give me whatever amount you choose." Bennie drew a silver half-dollar from his pocket and handed it to him, saying, "Here's fifty cents; that will make two dollars and fifty cents." The squire accepted the fifty cents, at the same time smiling at the bridegroom's vague notion of the meaning of the simple phrase, "the law allows," and the mystery of how he was going to obtain the two dollars from the law.

It was not until the next forenoon that they informed the folks that they had taken this serious step. Bennie proudly said to his mother, "Ma, I'm married."

"Go away with your nonsense and help Nina in the kitchen."

"I tell yer, Ma, I'm married."

"What's the matter with you, Bennie?"

"I tell you, me and Rose's married."

"Yes," said Rose, who was within hearing distance,

"Bennie and me was down to Squire Blunt's last night and got married."

"Who'd ever thought of our Bennie a-marryin' beneath us," said Mrs. Sampson to her husband. "It's a disgrace to the hull o' us. How kin I ever agin hold up my head in 'ciety? Dear, dear, what a terrible blow ter us." She cried and sobbed as she sank into a paroxysm of grief.

Joe ordered Rose to leave, but she stolidly refused to depart. Ike soon came in, and they informed him of the new turn in the affairs of the tavern. He was much amused by their piteous tale, but managed to appear sympathetic and did his best to calm them. He told Mrs. Sampson that if they sent Rose away she would be obliged to resign her position as Chairman of the Cemetery Improvement Society, and that her duties as mistress of such a flourishing hostelry would be such as to prevent her attending the social affairs in town. Joe was rather fearful, saying, "But, Mr. Glidden, I'm afeerd that Rose is a disperader and she may take our Bennie off to Canady or some other furrin place."

"Oh, no," replied Ike, "she is not so dangerous. Rose is all right; let her have her way and it will make it easier for you; she will have the care and work, and you are getting now where ease will be a pleasure, you know."

"Yes, that's so; well, Mr. Glidden, your advice is allus good. Liza, what ye think? best to follow his advice?"

"Just as you say, Joe; I s'pose Lawyer Glidden's got the correct notion of it; and bein's we're sort o'

riled and he's cool, why, most like we'd be better suited later if we do foller his advice," replied Liza.

Rose being within hearing distance Joe called to her, and both he and Liza in Ike's presence gave welcome — not very jubilantly, to be sure, but still it was welcome — to their Bennie's wife. The scene was very amusing to Ike; Liza's tearful yet resigned embrace and Joe's manner, too, showing that while resigned to the "disgrace of Bennie's marriage beneath them," he did not intend to stoop much to favor poor Rose. Time, however, demonstrated that this reconciliation was the foundation of the complete success of Sampson's Tavern.

A traveling salesman named Carson made a visit to Blueberry Falls about once every three weeks to solicit orders from the numerous grocers there, and owing to the train arrangement and having only a few customers at the Falls, he usually planned to drive from the Falls to Squirmtown to spend an afternoon and evening of each trip, and made his headquarters at the tavern.

The table service and variety of food were not nearly up to his idea of hotel fare, and the beds were far from being comfortable; but he was obliged to endure it in order to retain the patronage he enjoyed at that place. One day while his thoughts were running on about his hard luck, in being obliged to stop at such a hotel, it occurred to him that, even if it were not within his power to improve the table, he might find a way in which to improve his bed. The next time he went to the city he purchased a mattress and set of springs and ordered them to be shipped to the landlady of Sampson's

Tavern, and then wrote a letter, presenting to her with his compliments the new articles he had purchased, and asked if she would kindly have them kept in the room generally assigned to him, the corner room over the office. Liza was both honored and pleased with such a useful and valuable present from Mr. Carson, and placed it in the corner room as he suggested, and whenever he came he occupied that room, as before, and found the bed very much more comfortable. Other patrons of the house learned of the choice bed in the corner room, and made a practice when they registered of demanding that they should have that particular room; but of course no guest was allowed to have it the day they expected Mr. Carson.

It is customary with most traveling salesmen who make regular trips to send advanced cards to their customers and to the hotels along the route, and Mr. Carson generally sent one of his postals to Sampson's Tavern, announcing the date of his expected visit to that caravansary, so Liza and Joe were always able to keep the corner room clean and in readiness for him. One time he made a flying trip on some special business, and drove into the hotel stable yard in Squirmtown late one afternoon, unexpectedly.

When Bennie saw Mr. Carson, muffled up in the great fur coat, drive into the stable at full speed, he hurried to the house to inform the folks of his arrival. Liza was usually pleased to see Mr. Carson; but when she was informed of his unexpected arrival she dropped a pan of biscuits that she was just removing from the oven, and said in a fit of excitement, "Good heavens, the corner

room!" and ran to the office door and sang out in an alarming voice, "Joe, Joe, come here!" Joe hurried to the kitchen to ascertain the cause of all this commotion that appeared to be let loose in that part of the house, and as the office door closed behind him said, "What in the world's all the trouble? What's the matter, Liza? thought perhaps one of the horses might er kicked Bennie."

"Mr. Carson has come," said Liza, "and the minister's got his room; yer know he always asked for the corner room, and had it every week when he's been up here, but yer know Rose didn't know Mr. Carson was a-comin' or she wouldn't have given the minister the corner room when he came."

"You can tell Mr. Carson," said Joe philosophically; "I guess he won't make no fuss about it, so long as it's tha' minister what's got the room."

Just before the bell rang for supper Ike drove in, and then a look of relief came over Liza's face, as she felt that he would advise her just what to do. Accordingly, she sent for him; he responded to the request of the landlady and went up to the family sitting-room, with a degree of curiosity to discover what she wanted to see him about.

"Am real glad to see you, Mr. Glidden; I am dredful 'fraid that I'm in an awful scrape," said the landlady.

"How is that, Mrs. Sampson? what seems to be the trouble?" inquired Ike.

She then told him about the present, the usual demand for the corner room, the minister being in pos-

session of it, Mr. Carson would be madder'n a wet hen.

Ike listened patiently, and finally said, "I'll tell you what I'd do."

"What will it be?" she anxiously asked.

"When the minister goes up to the meeting to-night, you and Rose take out the hair mattress and the springs and put them on the bed in whatever room Mr. Carson is to have, and put a pair of those squeaky, flattened-out and lop-sided springs, with one of the sawdust mattresses in the place of them, and it will teach him not to be so greedy for the corner room when he comes up here next time. He ought to be as willing to practise self-denial as he is to preach it, but then you never knew a minister who was willing to deny himself a good, soft, easy bed."

"Oh, I'm afraid he'd find it out," said she.

"He never will mistrust; he will always think the change was made before you assigned him the room, and when he gets into bed to-night, he'll swear like a trooper to himself for being so greedy about getting the corner room."

"All right; I'll try it," said the landlady, somewhat less nervous than before Ike attempted the joke in the matter. After supper Liza met Mr. Carson in the downstairs hall, and explained why they gave him room No. 2, and said, "I'll tell you how it is, — the minister comes here every Wednesday to have prayer-meeting in the evening, and always had the corner room 'cause you never happened to come before on a Wednesday, and like all the rest on 'em what comes, he insisted on having the corner room because it had such a nice bed in it."

“Oh, that’s all right, Mrs. Sampson, give me any other room and don’t give yourself any uneasiness about me. Let the minister have the room; no doubt he enjoys a good bed as much as the rest of us.”

“I’ll tell you what I’ll do,” shrewdly suggested the landlady, winking an eye as if a brilliant thought had come to help her out of the dilemma; “yer know the minister’ll be a-goin’ up to prayer-meetin’ by and by, and I’ll change the mattress and springs and put them in No. 2 for you, and he’ll never know the difference until he goes to bed.”

Mr. Carson was so amused at the craftiness of the old lady, and her willingness to deceive the minister, that he broke into a laugh, and could scarcely say, “Don’t do it on my account,” as he passed out at the door to make a call on his customers.

She managed to make the change, and after the third or fourth drummer at the breakfast table asked the divine how he slept, some one volunteered the information of the cunning trick the landlady had played on the minister, which caused a great burst of laughter, and afforded another yarn for the drummers on the road, about the funny things that happened at the tavern in Squirmtown.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MISER WHITE.

LAZARUS WHITE was a miser and possessed a reputation for meanness unequalled in the county. He lived upon a farm, and had been successful to such an extent that people looked upon him as a man of considerable means.

He loaned money to the people in slender circumstances throughout the district, at large rates of interest, and had become a man of such varied business affairs as is peculiar to a country money-lender.

He spent his days in work about the farm, and the hours which others allotted to repose were spent by him in pursuing claims under snap mortgages, and his old farm wagon might be heard rattling about town into the late hours of the night.

He usually drove an old mare, blind of one eye, sprung in both forward legs and blowing like a pair of bellows from the effects of a chronic case of heaves. It used to be said by the village joker that the old mare gave Lazarus' debtors sufficient warning to take themselves out of his way if they expected a call from him. Others said that he kept the old mare " 'cause she couldn't see more'n half the fodder in her crib and used to leave a lot till the next time."

Lazarus was very deaf, but if anybody along the road-

side so much as whispered "twelve per cent" the old mare would stop so quickly you'd think she was tied to a post. She had been used by no one but Lazarus for so long a time that all she knew was "twelve per cent." If you wanted to start her and pulled on the reins she would not make an effort to move unless you said "twelve per cent," and it was the same if you wished to stop her. If anybody had any horses or cattle to sell cheap Lazarus might generally be reckoned as a prospective customer, because he bought on the short side for cash and sold on the long side on credit at twelve per cent interest. Therefore the people of moderate means in need of cattle and horses often went to Lazarus and paid him his extraordinary price together with a usurious rate of interest. A consignment of western horses was brought to the village to be sold at auction. In the number was a beautiful bay gelding with black points, that was knocked down to Lazarus for the sum of sixty-one dollars, he being the highest bidder therefor. Lazarus took the gelding home, believing that his new acquisition was a bargain.

His first attempt to harness and drive his new horse proved rather disastrous. The gelding either had never been in harness before or was too wild for carriage use, for in their endeavor to train him he reared and stood on his hind legs, then pawed with his forward feet, and with the force of a cyclone sent his hind feet through Lazarus' wagon dasher. A further attempt was made to reconcile the gelding to the customs of a driving horse, but when he started on a run and did not stop until he had crossed the field and became entangled

with trees at the edge of the woods, every hope of ever being able to tame him was abandoned and he was turned out to pasture.

Lazarus gave a home to Jimmy Hope, his step-daughter's son ; that is, he allowed the boy to remain with him under the pretence of extending a charity to an orphan. Jimmy was provided with a bed in the dingy garret of the farm house, and was expected to do the drudgery of the barn work and be a slave in the field. In his rough chamber there was indeed nothing to add cheerfulness or make the place resemble a boy's home. In one corner was stored the usual refuse of a farm house, and in another corner was poor Jimmy's bed, covered by a much worn patchwork quilt, and the only light was gained through a tiny window, scarcely large enough to even ventilate the room during the warm summer nights.

Jimmy, who had been taught to call the old man grandpa, was obliged to remain in the field all day to assist in the lighter labors of the farm ; to milk and care for the cows, and to sit up at night and await the return of the old man from his trips to town and unharness and groom the old mare.

During the experiences with the wild gelding in trying to break him to harness, Jimmy met with an accident that injured his arm and disabled him for performing manual labor. He was like many other boys when not at work, usually contriving some boyish amusement. One day while the men were engaged in the field hay-ing, Jimmy hung a rope for a swing in the big barn doors, and was enjoying himself in it when Lazarus and

his two hired men came to the house to dinner. Jimmy had provided wood and water for the kitchen, and creditably performed all the chores to be done about the premises, and was, in fact, simply taking a quiet rest in his swing when the old man saw him.

“Who put up that ’ere swing? Can’t yer find nuthin’ else ter do round here but cut up capers like this? ’Cause yer arm’s lame and yer can’t work in the field think yer goin’ ter spend ther rest yer life in luxury and ease.”

“I’ve done all the chores, grandpa. Didn’t think ’twould be no harm me puttin’ up this swing for passin’ away time.”

“You’ve passed away too much o’ yer time foolin’ like this; think it’s ’bout time yer began ter earn somethin’ to pay yer keep. There’s them girls down to the village earnin’ more’n their board in ther bottlin’ works, and you ought ter be able to earn as much as a girl; so you can go to Deacon Squirm’s ’safternoon and tell him I sent yer down fer a job.

“Who’ll take care of the cows, grandpa, if I do get a job in the bottlin’ works?”

“Who d’yer s’pose? can’t yer milk them cows ’fore six o’clock in ther mornin’? When I was a boy that ’der been only play fer me.”

That afternoon Jimmy saw Deacon Squirm and secured such a position as a person with a lame arm might fulfil. The deacon promised to give him a chance to wait on the girls in the labeling room. The next morning Jimmy commenced his duties at the bottling works. He was such a genial, obliging and good boy that he

soon became a favorite. His popularity had a tendency to draw him into the graces of those engaged in the harmless mischief in which a crowd of young people are so apt to be concerned, and he was frequently responsible for such pranks. On two different occasions he was included with a number that were discharged. Such dismissals were necessary in order to maintain discipline, and those discharged were usually reinstalled after a few days' idleness.

One morning Dennis Bogan called at the bottling works to see Deacon Squirm, and while engaged in conversation the deacon with a worried look upon his countenance broke out in a loud voice, "That Brown girl is the noisiest imp I ever saw, an' mischevious too. I don't know what to do with her. My wife couldn't do anything with her at the house, 'cause she wouldn't more'n half wash the dishes, so she sent her out here to the bottlin' shop ter help me. I don't know what to do with her. She's a-destroyin' evert bit o' disceepin among the girls, and we must get rid of her in order ter save the crew from total deemolashun. I hate ter discharge her, for she is such a happy, innocent-looking gal, and then, too, she can fill more bottles than any two o' the other gals. I reely don't know what ter do."

"Be aisy with the child," said Dennis; "she'll quiet down afther a while."

Before Dennis had ceased to speak an uproar arose in the labeling room. A door was flung noisily open, and a half-grown boy fell forward on the floor at Deacon Squirm's feet, amid a shower of printed labels which fell from a basket tied to his overalls. "It was Katy

Brown," said the boy half dazed. "She did it while I had my eyes shut, and she set me a-spinnin' afore I knew it."

The deacon entered the room from whence the uproar came and a deep hush ensued. "Katy Brown," he said, "you go to your own home, and don't show up here again; and you, Jimmy Hope, you idiot, think you'd better get a chance to hoe potatoes and pray for wit."

Five minutes afterwards a girl with frowsy tow hair, ragged indigo-blue dress and sailor hat, went away from the bottling works with her head bent low and great choking sobs breaking forth with every step she took. She was followed by the boy, his head likewise bowed in grief, and his great gawky limbs mournfully wobbling his way to idleness.

At a turn in the road the girl faced about to take a last look at the bottling works of Deacon Squirm. The tears were streaming down her cheeks, but her face was a picture to inspire a painter. It was a beautiful face, though tear-stained and grimy and fringed with teasing tow. She was yet but a child, but for some months her earnings had been her only guarantee of support for herself and her invalid mother, who remained helpless at home in the little cottage on the hillside. She was going home now to tell her poverty-stricken and invalid mother that she had lost her employment and that hunger stared them in the face. And all through a careless little joke on that foolish Jimmy Hope. The tears came like a June torrent at the thought, and then Jimmy's bulky form interrupted the flow of misery as he blindly tumbled against the tearful Katy.

Quick as a flash Katy recoiled and dealt the lumbering boy a resounding slap, followed by a quick push, which knocked Jimmy heavily to the ground. "Take that, you fool," said Katy, glad of an opportunity to wreak some revenge on one of the causes of her misery; but poor Jimmy did not rise. She became alarmed and bent over him. His head had struck a rock and he was unconscious.

"Oh, poor Jimmy! poor Jimmy! wake up: I'm sorry, Jimmy; really I am. Do wake up," cried the girl, and hastily wetting the edge of her dress in a pool by the roadside she placed Jimmy's head on her lap and began wiping the blood and dirt from his face. Then Jimmy sighed, and Katy kissed his homely mouth, and Jimmy opened his eyes and jumped to his feet. "My gracious, Katy! I didn't think you'd kiss me. Deuce it all! I was mad with you for gettin' me fired, but if I'd know'd you'd kiss me again I would's leave git fired and knocked down again — What yer goin' ter do, Katy?"

"Dunno, Jimmy; what are you?"

"Dunno, Katy; grandpa swore he wouldn't take me in if I got discharged again. I don't see nothin' but tramp; if it wasn't fer me lame arm I'd go ter sea. What'll yer poor ma do?"

"I dunno, Jim; oh, I dunno what'll become of us all," and then both wept together. "Well," said Jim at length, "less brace up, Katy, and go down to your house till I tell yer ma how it was I caused the trouble."

"No, you won'y, Jimmy; but you can come and hear me tell the truth," and they went down to Widow Brown's together. There was nothing to do but accept

what fate had sent, and poor Widow Brown had passed through many trials in her life, so many that nothing now caused her to show any outward symptoms of mental distress.

Jimmy and Katy parted in the yard. "I hope your grandpa'll treat you good," said Katy. I'm goin' ter make a bathin' suit and go down and swim below the point. Folks thinks it's too early, but I don't care. Come down and see us, Jimmy, and I won't plague you any more."

Then Jimmy wended his way homeward and went up to the garret room of his grandpa's house, where he had been allowed to live since his mother died.

"Lost your job, have you? Well, get out; that's all. Git! I don't want no more to do with you." That was the miser's greeting to the boy.

"But won't you give me a little of the money I've earned, to take me to Bar Harbor? I can get work there."

"No, not a cent. I've let you live on me long enough. It wasn't enough for your sickly, no-count mother to waste my grub and money in idleness till she had to fasten you ont'er me after costing me funeral expenses and doctors' bills."

"Stop!" said the boy, "old Miser White, as the folks call you, don't you dare say a word agin my mother, or I'll run your foul old tongue out of your head. I'll come back some time and make you sorry for what you said, as it is."

"Come back here, Jim. I don't want you to go that way," said the old man, a sudden change coming over him.

"Mercy on me! but he looked like his father, and Darius Hope was a likely fellow. Come back, Jim, do!"

"When I come back, old Miser White, you'll wish I staid away," sung out Jim, as he reached the road and started for the village.

"Ole man's ugly, eh?" asked Ace Bragdon, the village vagabond, ambling out of the woods a few rods on. "'Pears like you hain't been yoking up well."

"I'll never go back to live with him again, that's certain," said Jim.

"Oughter laid round and grubbed some of his dough, though, 'fore you'd let him turn you out that way. I s'pose he has a few dollars lying hid 'round the house?"

"I suppose so," said Jimmy. "The old curmudgeon's too mean to trust a bank."

"Where you goin'?" asked Ace.

"I'm going down town to see if I can git a chance to ship as cook."

"Good idea," said Ace. "You jest go take a day off somewheres and enjoy yourself, and to-morrow Cap'n Bill Freebit'll be in with some fish, and I'll guarantee to get him to take you to Grand Menan with him."

"It's a whack," said Jim.

Take a day off! Why, where could Jim spend a day? He wandered down to Widow Brown's. She cried, poor thing, when she heard his story. She couldn't ery over her own grief, but Jim's sad story touched the fountain-head and she wept silently. Jim's parents had been her dear friends in the good old days when health and strength made them all the wealthiest

and happiest people living. Katy was out. Her mother said she had gone down to the shore to look for drift-wood.

Jim went back to the woods, sat on a sunny knoll and listened to the dreamy music of the wood birds. They seemed to sing of sorrow and of pain, of homelessness and hopelessness; then the songs became softer, drearier, and the sun went down, the stars came out and Jim slept.

The next morning the village was astir with a report that Jimmy Hope had treated his grandfather in a brutal manner, and then robbed him of all the money and bonds in his possession. Men were gathered in groups discussing the crime, and great excitement prevailed. The rumor was to the effect that the boy in the nighttime had battered and bruised the old man until he left him for dead, and then stole all his valuables.

The whole community was disturbed over the matter, but the sensation reached its climax about ten o'clock in the forenoon, when Jimmy, apparently unconcerned and as innocently as a child, strolled down to Hall's wharf. He saw a crowd, headed by Sile Lombard, the village constable, hurrying toward him. "Grab him, boys!" exclaimed Sile as they got within speaking distance of Jimmy. The crowd began to hoot, "Robber! robber! almost killed yer grandfather, didn't yer?" The constable rushed upon him, and another large, burly man jumped upon his back. "Now we've got yer. Hold up yer hands!" said the constable.

"It isn't necessary to handcuff me, Mr. Lombard. If you think it is your duty to arrest me, you won't need

any help. I will go with you," said the boy with fear and trembling.

"Hold up yer hands and do as I tell yer," said the constable, as he snapped the iron bracelets upon him.

Swelling with indignation at the harsh manner in which he was being treated, but helpless unless he imperiled the safety of his life, he yielded to the handcuffs. As they were marching him up to the village, the constable and assistant holding revolvers to his head, Jimmy gathered sufficient courage to again ask the cause of such treatment, and was informed of the nature of the charge against him. When he heard that he was accused of being guilty of such an atrocious act his face turned white with wrath, his eyes blazed, and he almost fainted.

By the time they reached the village the news of the arrest had spread broadcast, and a greater number gathered around him.

The mutterings of the crowd rose to shouts, fists were shaken at the whitefaced and handcuffed prisoner, and men spat upon him in rage. Not a friendly or sympathetic face did Jimmy see, and he keenly felt the mortification of his predicament; but there was something that yet relieved him from anxiety of what the end would be, because the arrest had been too preposterous. However, an occasional cry of "Lynch him! lynch him!" from some member of the infuriated mob, was enough to make the boy feel some little relief when he had been pushed into the village lockup and the heavy door closed upon him.

"Good thing he didn't have no revolver, boys, or we

wouldn't 'er got him without some blood bein' spilt," said the constable, swelling with self-confidence and delight at his success in having taken the boy into custody.

"Yes, sirree," responded another, "he's a bad one, an' anybody that'd almost murder an ole man 'ud do anything."

When the crowd about the lockup began to disperse the boy sat down and commenced to pull himself together, and more seriously than before faced the conditions.

He was arrested, and yet it was hard for him to make it seem real. "But I am either the victim of circumstances or the subject of some one's revenge," he said to himself, "and it seems hard if somebody will not even listen to me. Wonder if Lawyer Glidden is agin me too?" he said to himself.

During this trying time it was true there seemed to be no one at all interested in the maintenance of the boy's innocence, with the exception of Katy Brown, who was too much embarrassed to venture where the crowd could see her tears. However, with tears in her eyes she besought Dennis Bogan to secure Lawyer Glidden to defend Jimmy. At that time even the kind-hearted Dennis seemed to believe that the boy was guilty; but her pathetic words and sincere manner somewhat touched his heart, and he assured her that he immediately would see the lawyer. From that time forth Dennis gave earnest attention to securing counsel for the boy.

Dennis told the lawyer about Katy's interest in the boy and in the end said, "See here, lawyer, I b'lieve

meself now that the little fellow's innocent and you do too, don't you?"

"While he may have been a mischievous boy," said Ike, "I certainly do not think him capable of such a desperate deed. The circumstances lead me to believe it is the plot of some person whose villainous instincts are more mature than is possible to find in one so young as this boy. It will be hard to contend with the indignation that exists; but I assure you, Dennis, that I will do my best to defend the boy, because I do believe him innocent."

Ike went down to the lockup, and said to the prisoner, "Jimmy, Katy Brown has engaged me to defend you. What is the story?"

The boy had been thinking of securing counsel, and the manner in which he might be able to do so was a matter that worried him; but the fact that he actually had counsel, secured by his friend Katy Brown, brought a ray of unexpected sunshine to him in the midst of his melancholy moments.

"The story!" responded Jimmy. "I don't know, 'cause there hain't none. All there is to it, I'm not guilty, and don't know nothin' 'bout it."

"Well, I don't believe that you are, my boy. But these hot-headed people have blundered, and we'll have to prepare for the trial."

When the client left Ike looked puzzled, because the circumstances were very dangerous and suspicion rested heavily upon the boy. Then there was so little time to investigate the case, as an examination was to be held within half an hour in the magistrate's court.

But he was possessed of a world of sympathy for any mischievous boy, for during his own boyhood days he had been harshly criticised for his pranks, and often when not at fault he was held accountable for the malicious tricks of others. He always maintained that because a boy was mischievous it did not necessarily follow that he was a bad boy, and until good substantial evidence was shown, generally questioned the guilt of any lad accused of a wrong act. At no time was his kindness more apparent than when an appeal was made to him to defend Jimmy Hope, who was charged with robbery. While the charge against him was rather more serious than the usual prank of a heedless boy, he felt that there were circumstances of an extenuating nature, and had readily promised to plead the boy's cause, notwithstanding there was no prospect of his ever receiving any remuneration for his services.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SMUGGLER.

A HEARING in the case of Jimmy Hope was held before Magistrate Blunt; and Lawyer Bombshell, the prosecuting attorney for the county, came from a neighboring town to represent the State.

At the trial the attorney for the prosecution told the story, as it appeared to him, — how Jimmy, after having been nursed and fed by the poor old man, came home the day before, as he had on many previous occasions, with the news that he had been discharged from his place of employment; how, when chided by the poor old man for his evil conduct, he turned upon him with threats, and at night, under cover of the darkness, he had crept stealthily to the bedside of his benefactor and dealt him pitiless and painful blows with murderous intent, and then, thinking his victim dead, he ransacked the house and took away with him all the money to be found.

As he proceeded Jimmy gradually grew paler, and finally collapsed in his chair beside the constable. Jimmy was revived, and the first witness, Ace Bragdon, was called. Ace hung his head sluggishly, and told of the conversation he had overheard between Jimmy and his grandfather. He said during the night he looked out of his window, and thought he saw Jimmy sneaking

along the road toward the village with a bag. Captain Freebit of Grand Menan was the second witness. He was there with a small vessel, containing a cargo of fresh fish to be disposed of among the inhabitants. He claimed to be a relative of Asa Bragdon, whom he visited during his stay, and that about low water, at half-past twelve o'clock, midnight, he felt somewhat uneasy about his craft listing outward, and got up and went down to Hall's wharf, where his vessel was anchored.

On his way to the wharf he had met a young man carrying a bag. Thought the young man might have been the prisoner. Sile Lombard testified to arresting Jimmy on Hall's wharf, suspecting that he was getting ready to get into a boat to row down river.

Court adjourned at noon until after the dinner hour.

The people of the district were indignant and declared that such a culprit never before existed, and especially severe in his condemnation was the town vagabond, Asa Bragdon. Asa's parboiled face was a study. His countenance was bubbling over with suppressed emotion, in which one might imagine that pleasure, fear and horror struggled for the mastery.

"He ought ter be lynched by right," said Asa.

"That's wot he had," agreed Captain Freebit.

"Let's wait until we see how the old man comes out," suggested another; "if he dies we'll lynch him sure."

After the dinner recess Lawyer Glidden called his client aside in the court-room, and said to him in a low voice, "Jimmy, I have already seen enough of these witnesses to satisfy me that you are an innocent boy.

You are the victim of a plot. This case will develop itself, but it may take time, perhaps weeks, possibly months; but I am satisfied that in time you will be vindicated. I cannot offer any defence here to-day; 'tis too soon for you to try to unravel the flimsy chain of circumstantial evidence that they have wound around you. You will probably be held for the higher court by Squire Blunt, but don't worry over it. This case will be thoroughly investigated before the session of the high court opens, and there will be a new picture to show the people about that robbery. I have already seen enough to enable me to pick out the guilty parties. I believe that you are innocent, and I will stand by you until I see you set free."

Then Lawyer Glidden arose and stated to the magistrate that it would be quite impossible to present a plausible defence at that time, and it would be for the interests of his client to waive the right to offer a defence at the preliminary hearing. He also stated that the short space of time in which he had been allowed to prepare such an important case was insufficient, and that he would withhold the evidence in defence of the prisoner until the session of the Supreme Court. The magistrate of course ordered Jimmy sent to jail to await the sitting of the Supreme Court, unless he could furnish a large bond for his appearance there. To secure a bond for Jimmy when such wrath existed against him would be an utter impossibility. He was removed to the lockup, behind the doors of the village prison, and watched by an armed guard.

The day before the trial Katy Brown had seen Captain

Freebit's craft sailing up the river, and was at the wharf while the few fish that comprised the cargo were being landed. There was something mysterious in the manner of Asa Bragdon and Captain Freebit when they saw her approaching the wharf. This wharf was practically abandoned for commercial purposes, and stands out on the river shore, some distance below the village. There was something peculiar about the affair that attracted her attention, and yet, she could not understand it, it certainly had aroused her curiosity. The stranger with Ace Bragdon did not present a very respectable appearance.

"What is he, a smuggler?" she said to herself. She told her mother about their strange movements, and while she was full of curiosity to trace the movements of the strange seamen, she did not even dream of informing the Government officials if the captain should prove to be a smuggler.

She had been alternating all day between her home and the wharf, where she could give vent to her tears for poor Jimmy in his unfortunate predicament.

When she heard of the result of the trial, and that Ace Bragdon and a strange captain claimed to know that Jimmy was guilty, and that their testimony was conclusive evidence of his guilt, a spirit of revenge came over her. She burst out in tears again, and said, "That man's a smuggler; I knew he was not an honest man. I'll watch him until he leaves the river, and, if possible, I'm going to have his craft searched, for I can see through his mysterious movements now. He's a smuggler and has brought some contraband goods here." Her

interest in the mysterious captain from that moment was unbounded.

She kept a close vigil on his craft, and at about the supper hour when the tide was at its fulness, she saw the captain and Asa when they went to the wharf and with a small boat proceeded to row to the schooner at anchor.

"I'm goin' up ter Lawyer Glidden's and get him ter come down and search that vessel; p'raps he'll find some trace of whatever kind of goods been smuggled in, and then they can be traced somewhere until we find out who is layin' in with the smuggler and helpin' him get rid of his smuggled things over round here."

She did not even take the time necessary to acquaint her mother with the course she had resolved upon, but went directly to the lawyer's office. Without prefacing her remarks with a story of particulars she made the startling announcement as she hastily entered the office, "There's a smuggler down here; come search his vessel."

"What are the facts? tell me about it," anxiously inquired Ike.

"I don't know. Don't you care to search a suspicious captain's craft?" said Katy.

"Oh, yes, but let me know the details."

"The details are little enough, and chiefly based upon suspicion; ain't that enough to search him, suspicion what makes me feel sure we've got a smuggler," said Katy.

"Successful smugglers as a rule are a set of brainy fellows, and it is true we scarcely ever have a certainty to work from, and have to start a case on merely a suspicion; but won't you please give me the facts, and then

I'll see how much suspicion I can see in them. If you would only tell me something I would have the man watched," continued Ike.

"Oh, there's no need o' watchin' him, for I've been doin' that. You've a right, haven't you, Lawyer Glidden, to search a place where there's supposed to be things what the duties never was paid on?"

"Certain officials have such a right, but I don't know as I have that authority."

"Well, get the constable and come with me, and I'll warrant you'll find enough suspicion to make a search, and I know if you'll make a search you'll find some contraband goods. He's gettin' ready to go out of the river, and if yer want him yer must come at once."

Ike acted upon this last suggestion and solicited Constable Sile Lombard to assist him in searching for foreign goods and wares. On the way down Katy related the facts upon which her suspicion had been based, facts so convincing that even if he was not an authorized Government official, he resolved to take the liberty to examine into such a mysterious case of apparent violation of the federal law.

"Wonder what 'tis he's a-smugglin', p'raps it's opium or something o' that kind. Small packages, drugs, I'll bet. Of course there's some one here in league with him that forwards the stuff to New York. He's only an old fisherman in the employ of some professional smuggler. There's been lots of complaints lately about smugglin', 'cause they claim that the stuffs a-comin' in all along the shore and then is sent out on the railroad."

Ike and Sile went out to the small vessel and climbed

on board. "Prutty good thing, Sile, that Cap'n Freebit and I saw that scamp on the road last night or you would had no evidence ter held him on," said Asa, with a look of fear and anxiety on his face.

"That's so, Ace, but don't want yer ter go 'way ; may need yer again ter-morrer if there's a trial, said Sile."

"'Nother trial ter-morrer?"

"Shouldn't wonder."

"Got 'nother case agin that villain?"

"Don't know, but maybe."

While Sile was engaged in conversation with Asa, Ike commenced a search. The captain and Asa began to show considerable nervousness, and no satisfaction was given to their inquiries about the object of the proceedings. Ike was conducting the search in a systematic manner; opened, probed into, and examined every hole, crevice and space available for secreting small packages, and when about to abandon a further hunt, reached for a rope that ran over the side of the vessel and into the water. He pulled on the rope; it was too light for an anchor or anything of that sort; he continued to pull, and on the end of the rope was fastened a bundle tied and wound up in a rubber blanket.

"Smuggled goods, by jinks!" cried Ike. "Knew you were a smuggler; Sile, you arrest both of 'em."

"I hain't no smuggler; can't connect me with no smugglin'; hadn't ought ter 'rrest me," cried Asa.

"Well, Sile, you take care of the captain, and I'll take care of this package of opium; I know it must be something of that kind," said Ike.

They rowed ashore, the lawyer taking care of the wet

and dripping package, Sile guarding the captain, and Asa rowing the boat. When they reached the shore, where Katy Brown was standing, Ike got out first, Asa next, and when Sile got out and was reaching to help the captain ashore, the captain, as quick as a flash, pushed the boat from the wharf, and rowed for the opposite shore as rapidly as bone and muscle could handle oars. Sile, who was inexperienced in the management of prisoners, stood still, looked at the man in the boat rowing away and was as dumbfounded as a post. "Why in thunder did you allow that prisoner to get away? You stick! you wooden man! I thought you knew enough to hold on to him. Quick! get another boat and we'll chase him," cried Ike in anger and consternation.

"There's not another boat on the shore," said Katy Brown.

"Well, hurry and we'll get a team and some help, and we'll chase round on the other side, and try and get him again," said Ike.

They hurried to the village, left the wet parcel unopened at Ike's office, secured a team and started on a hunt for the escaped smuggler. When darkness had lowered upon them the party gave up the hunt and returned to town tired and exhausted.

On their return Ike invited those who accompanied him in the hunt to go to his office, where he would treat them to cigars for the services rendered, and before he passed the cigars around to the boys he concluded that he would first satisfy his curiosity by opening the wet package and seeing what kind of goods Captain Freebit was smuggling.

While he was untying and removing the many coverings upon the parcel the crowd sat there joking about Sile's letting the captain slip through his hands, and eagerly watching to see what the removal of the wrapping would reveal.

Lo and behold, what were the contents of that package? Lazarus White's money and bonds!

The excitement that prevailed was indescribable. Threats were made to lynch Asa Bragdon, but he could not be found. "No," said one, "he left the crowd just soon as it got dark; bet he's so far in the woods by this time he'll never be seen agin round here."

The lockup was boldly broken open, and poor, innocent Jimmy Hope liberated amidst a cheering and delighted throng of people. All were delighted to hear the good news that Jimmy Hope was not the villain that the vagabonds had painted him. The change of sentiment in his favor had a tendency to incense the populace against the perpetrators of the crime, and with indignant rage they threatened to culminate in a lynching. Ace, however, saved them the trouble, for the next morning he was found in the woods hanging to a tree, where he had committed suicide. In the midst of the excited crowd that night Katy Brown forced her way to where Jimmy was, and said, "Jimmy, I knew you was innocent, and 'twas me that sent Mr. Bogan after the lawyer for you." Jimmy was dumb with gratitude for her loyalty to him. His throat filled, and tears streamed down his cheeks as he tried to speak to her.

The money and bonds were taken to Lazarus White that night, when they found him hovering between life

and death. His feelings for Jimmy were so sympathetic that, in his eagerness to see the boy who had been unjustly treated, he did not even refer to the return of the money and bonds, but said, "Where is my boy Jimmy? Bring him to me."

"Here I am, grandpa," as he clasped his arm about the maimed old man and caressed him.

Lazarus lingered a few months, a hopeless invalid, but his disposition changed and his miserly nature had disappeared. Jimmy cared for him and gave him every attention a nurse could give a patient. Katy Brown came frequently for her mother to inquire about the health of Mr. White, and the old man even in his feeble condition could not but see the sincere devotion of the young lady to his grandchild.

He liked them both, and frequently told them that it was his intention to leave them his homestead, and that he hoped that they would live long to enjoy it, and be happy in the home where he had spent his lifetime. He died, however, quite suddenly, and left no will.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BAR HARBOR DERBY.

AFTER the tragic death of Lazarus White his son, Royal Flush White, came home and took charge of his father's business, and in the capacity of administrator entered upon the duties of settlement of the estate.

Such wild and reckless management of business affairs was almost without a parallel, and his improvident methods indicated disaster and financial ruin in a very short time. Little did the neighbors of old Mr. White think that the money for which he had toiled early and late, for which so many self-denials and small deceptions had been made, and which he had hoarded with such miserly care, would ever be used to maintain any one in luxury; yet so it was, for when Royal assumed control of his father's estate, he began by squandering money right and left in the gratification of his imprudent desires.

His first business transaction was to order Jimmy from the house. Poor Jimmy was thus made homeless. This sorrow, added to the shame of his recent troubles, made him very melancholy; but Jimmy could not bear dependency and immediately started in quest of new employment. While trudging down the road, with a small bundle of clothes under his arm, he met Katy Brown, to whom he confided his troubles.

“Come home to my mother’s house, and I know she will give you shelter.”

The two walked along together, and while passing the home of Dennis Bogan, Dennis called out, “Good morning, Jimmy, and how be ye to-day?” Before he could respond Dennis perceived the tears rolling down his cheeks, and said soothingly, “What’s the matter, me poor boy?” When he had repeated the story Dennis said, “Come, boy, come into my house and stay as long as you please. Owing to your poor withered arm ye can’t fin’ work that suits you. You’ll have a home with me and me wife as long as ye care to stay with us. Come in now and stop cryin’.” He accepted the hospitality offered him by Mr. Bogan, and from that time on made it his place of abode.

One day shortly after he took up his residence with Dennis he took him into his confidence, and told him a story about the bay gelding that had been such a disappointment to his grandfather and which had been the subject of so many jokes about “Lazarus White’s gettin’ took in.” Jimmy told Dennis that the gelding was of no value whatever for use in a carriage or a wagon, but that as a saddle horse he was a perfect wonder. “Grandpa never knew,” said Jimmy, “that I used to ride him when goin’ after the cows, because I was afraid to tell him. You know before that trouble he’d a whipped me if he’d known I’d been a-ridin’ him, and after that I was afraid he’d be worried for fear I’d git hurt if he knowed I’d been a-ridin’ him. Roy, since grandpa died, offered to sell the horse to Bluster Rankin for twenty-five dollars, but Bluster never offered him more

than ten. Before grandpa died I made up my mind that soon's I earned money enough in the bottlin' works that I was goin' ter git some one ter buy it for me ; but, course after I got discharged and had that trouble, never thought no more 'bout it till t'other day when I was thinkin' 'bout how I was ever goin' ter pay Lawyer Glidden for what he done at the trial. Roy's still willin' ter take twenty-five dollars, and I'd like to know what you think about me goin' down ter see the lawyer and tellin' him about the horse. It's worth more'n any horse in the deestriet, and if he can be bought for twenty-five dollars it is a huggin' trade."

"How fast can he go?" asked Dennis.

"Fast?" answered Jimmy, "he can run like a fox. I b'lieve he can go's fast as any them hosses they tell about over to Bar Harbor."

"If that's so," said Dennis, "let's go and see the lawyer, and if he sez yis we'll buy the geldin' before some other chap gets round and buys him of Roy for a song."

They accordingly told Ike about the wonderful qualities of the gelding as a saddle horse, and Ike promptly said, "Dennis, I'll put up the money if you'll carry out the negotiations with Royal. He ought to be worth twenty-five dollars, even to play with, if you can't use him in a carriage. If we get him we'll give him a trial, and if he shows any speed, we will enter him in the Derby at Bar Harbor." Dennis had little difficulty in securing the animal at the price named.

The next morning Ike and Dennis drove on a country road, where Jimmy was to speed the gelding. When they had gone about two miles they tied their horse by

the roadside and waited for Jimmy to ride down by them. "Here he comes, Dennis," said Ike, and in a few seconds Jimmy rode past at full speed. "He's got more speed than any horse I ever saw. He's a wonder, Dennis."

Jimmy rode about half a mile, turned, and rode back to where they were stationed.

"Go up and bring him down again, Jimmy; see if you can get up as much steam as you did before," requested Ike.

"Steam! ho, that wasn't half his steam," proudly said Jimmy, as he galloped up the road again.

"He's coming, Dennis. Just look at him," and when he went by them Ike said, "That horse can beat any horse in Maine. I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll get him ready to start in the Bar Harbor races."

"Faith, an' that's phwat we'll do," responded Dennis.

They returned to town highly pleased with the result of the trial, and decided to have Jimmy exercise the horse daily to get it in condition for the race. The great speed demonstrated by this apparently wild horse was a revelation.

By reason of Jimmy's lame arm Dennis suggested that a more experienced rider might be able to get even a greater degree of speed from the animal. Another young man was engaged to assist in the preparation for the race, and if necessary to ride the race. It was a useless change; the gelding seemed to appreciate Jimmy's kind disposition, and would respond to every command given, to show his full appreciation of the esteem he had for his rider.

It was not long before the news spread throughout the district and even into the surrounding towns of the wonderful speed of the horse.

The grand reports of its fleetness attracted the attention of turfmen and others, and it was not many days until several men visited Blueberry Falls for the purpose of buying the promising king of the turf. A sale was finally consummated at a seemingly good price, five hundred dollars, and the gelding was taken to Bar Harbor by its new owner.

"What do you call this horse, Mr. Glidden?" asked the new owner.

"Bogan," replied Ike.

"Whom was he named for?"

"I named him after that old fellow you saw here this morning."

"He seems to be a clever old fellow, and I will hold on to the same name."

"Yes, Dennis is a clever man and an honest one. You may depend on it that he is a good man, whose intimate friends are all good and whose enemies are decidedly bad."

The horse Bogan was entered in a race at Bar Harbor, and was picked by almost everybody as a sure winner. In the first heat, away over on the back stretch, Bogan threw up, and the jockey did not seem to meet with very flattering results in his efforts to secure much speed from him, and the horse was finally withdrawn from the race.

"Where's that country boy that's been riding this horse?" cried some of the crowd that had their money bet on Bogan.

“I’ll have that boy here the next time this horse starts in a race, if it costs me a thousand dollars. This horse has speed ; and you will have an opportunity, boys, before long to win back more money than you have lost on him,” said the owner.

It seemed rather an unusual occurrence for the owner of a horse that is entered into a great contest to be depending on the skill of a country boy to win the race for him. But the man felt that his horse had sufficient speed if he were driven by some one who understood him.

Jimmy reluctantly consented to enter into competition with experienced and shrewd jockeys. He began duties by gaining the gelding’s affection. It was like a meeting of old friends ; the gelding readily recognized his new rider, for when Jimmy entered the stall he arched his neck gracefully, whinnied, shook his tail, and with a proud step pranced toward him. His eyes seemed to dilate with pleasure, his nostrils expanded, and there was a friendliness in the meeting more eloquent than words. The gelding seemed to delight in the friendship, in the sympathy and in the love Jimmy had for him.

Every morning until the race he was saddled by Jimmy and ridden around the course. At first he was allowed to set his own gait, but gradually he was urged to increase the speed which was his natural heritage. He became accustomed to the presence and voices of strangers about him, although he trusted none but Jimmy.

The day of the Derby was one of the most charming of the season, and Bar Harbor, that famous resort, was

the scene of great activity. In addition to the many summer visitors there were excursion parties there from all the surrounding towns and villages, and in the hotels and on the verandas of these vast hostelries were to be seen the usual mixed company, discussing the probable result of the race. Each were clashing with the other in the confused conversations that were in order, as they asserted their expectations of a favorite horse, but with all the agitation there was no mention of the horse Bogan to be heard. Certainly it must have been because he did not merit attention when so many other horses of renown and established prestige were entered in the contest.

Roy White crossed the hall and entered the reception room of the hotel, where he found a flashily dressed man who arose to meet him.

"I think you wished to see me," said Roy.

"My name is Wilson," said the man. "You have heard of me; I am a bookmaker at the race track."

"Pleased to meet you," said Roy, assuming a tone of cordiality. "What can I do for you, Mr. Wilson?"

"Well, I understand that you formerly owned the horse called Bogan, and I would like to know your opinion of his speed."

"Oh, that's it, is it? Well, I can tell you all about him. He's no earthly good; I sold him for twenty-five dollars, and was fully satisfied that I got all he was worth."

"That's just what I heard," said Wilson; "but they have been telling so much about his speed, we've regarded him as rather a dangerous horse in this race

coming off to-day, and a friend of mine told me you were here and could give me just the information we desire."

"Speed! if he's got any speed I'd like to know where he got it? Didn't they try to race him here a few days ago and he threw up on them? I tell ye he's nothing but an ugly plug, that is dangerous for any man to handle and never showed any signs of speed until they got him up here, and all I know is, they say he bucked up on that race they started him in."

"Didn't he show some wonderful speed down there at the time these fellows bought him?"

"Oh, that was only one of the bluffs of that lawyer down there — got up a great furore about the gelding's speed, and when these fellows went down to buy him, I suppose they either hypnotized them or got 'em drunk; anyway they must a done somethin' to 'em."

"Mr. White, would you advise your friends to bet money on this horse or against him?"

"Mr. Wilson, I am here, too, because I know the gelding. There's some men here that's lost their heads on him because they think he's fast, and owing to this I know there'll be a chance to make some money on this race."

"So you really intend to wager money on the race yourself, do you, Mr. White?"

"Yes, sir, I'm goin' ter bet all the money I've got with me, if I get a chance, on any horse in the field as against the geldin'."

"Thank you for this information, Mr. White, and I shall be guided by what you have told me. A man's

sincerity is usually best determined by his acts, and as you know the colt, I shall advise my friends to risk no money on him. I hope to see you after the race," said Wilson, as he walked out to the carriage that was waiting to take him to the park.

"How d'do, Mr. Glidden?" said the owner of Bogan, as he arose from his chair in the office of the hotel and cordially extended his hand. "Come up to see the race, did you?"

"Yes, quite a party of our people are here hoping to see your horse win out. By the way how is Jimmy getting on?"

"Oh, the boy is having excellent luck. He seems to be able to do anything he wishes with the horse."

"Mr. Glidden, you are a man of good, sound judgment and know the disposition of Bogan as well as I do, and I would like to have your candid opinion of the probable result of this race. Confidentially speaking, it will mean a great deal to me financially, as I have backed him almost to my limit."

"Don't be afraid of Bogan's throwing up as long as Jimmy Hope is on his back. He has the speed and ability to go faster than any horse I ever saw, and Jimmy Hope can handle him to perfection, unless the boy gets rattled on account of inexperience in jockeying."

"That's what I meant, Mr. Glidden, when I asked you for your opinion about risking a lot of money on a horse of peculiar characteristics, handled by a green country boy. It's a hard place to put a boy in and expect too much of him."

"Don't you worry about its being a hard place for

Jimmy ; I've seen him in a place ten times as hard as that and he was as cool as a cucumber."

" Well, Mr. Glidden, it's almost too late to get frightened now. I've staked my little pile on this race, and will have to stand it either way it winds up."

" So have I," said Ike ; " I've staked what little I had, and am not afraid that I'll have to walk home."

" Well, it looks as though we were pretty sure that the boy will create a sensation. Some of these fellows have gone four to one against the gelding. Here's good luck for the boy !" said the owner of the gelding, as he again shook hands with Ike and started for the race track.

The race took place, and Jimmy rode Bogan. It was a contest for both money and glory. It was for the best horse to win, and nothing could tempt owner, trainer or rider from the strictest line of honesty.

Intense excitement prevailed throughout the multitude, and the vehement cheers of those about the pool box seemed more deafening as the race progressed.

The race was one chapter of continuous amazement. As it progressed each person seemed to be more surprised at the startling manner in which the rider of Bogan was achieving fame for himself. But the climax was reached when Bogan, tossing his mane in the wind, opening his nostrils wide, and pointing his thin, close-set ears on the home stretch, was dashing for dear life through the midst of the other steeds in the last heat. A half-dozen more leaps brought him abreast of the leading horse, and then, feeling Jimmy's knee pressing his shoulders and hearing Jimmy's voice whis-

pering words of encouragement in his ears, the gelding dashed ahead, to rush down through the lane of an excited throng of people to a noble victory. It was the beginning of the career of a successful race horse, that has since won many victories and captured numerous prizes under the guidance of his sincere friend, Jimmy Hope.

After the closing of the race, while caressing Jimmy Hope, Ike said, "Did you see Katy's red cape waving from the grand stand? She stood right up in front of the crowd on the grand stand, and waved her shawl and cried out in the wildest enthusiasm for you."

"Katy! Katy Brown here! Where is she? I have not seen her," said the boy, who seemed surprised as well as delighted to learn that she was there to witness his triumph.

"Oh, she is with a party of folks from home, and has been trying to get down on the track to see you all the afternoon, but the rest of the girls would not let her come."

"Are there many people here from home?" anxiously inquired Jimmy, whose time had been so closely taken up that he had not been able to know who were at the race.

"Yes, there is a great crowd come over. You know there is an excursion and almost everybody that could leave home is here."

"Where can I find Katy?" said Jimmy.

The owner of the horse, with a cluster of people around him, was proudly accepting the congratulations extended to him, but was evidently as much interested

in Jimmy as in his own good fortune, because even in that shower of glory in which he was the central figure, he noticed what Jimmy said and yelled in response, "Never mind, Jimmy, I saw her when she waved the red cape. Mr. Glidden pointed her out to me. P'raps she's the mascot and not you."

"Honestly, I b'lieve she is," said Jimmy.

When the gelding had been taken in charge by the professional rubber and the stable men, Jimmy hurriedly followed the crowd of excursionists in pursuit of the young lady with the red cape.

The next evening, at the store of Ansel Hicks in Blueberry Falls, the gossip peculiar to the excursion was being talked over.

"What sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?" said Tim Cronin.

"What d'yer mean, Tim?" said Ansel.

"Why, Roy White looks so thin and grouty ter-day that yer'd think he was on the way from a cemetery," said Tim.

"No wonder; they say he lost heaps of money at the race yesterday," said Ame Blibbers.

"Yes, and I heerd that he was playin' keerds over there in the evening after the race was over, and there was a lot of money on the table; they were playin' a big game, and it came Roy's turn to deal the keerds, and somehow t'other he got the money, 'cause he bluffed 'em all out. Then some one caught him stealin' a keerd off'n the table ter make his hand strong, and they had a divil of a fuss. Yes, they made him give back all the money he won from them, and kicked him out o' ther room," continued Ame.

"That is good enough fer anybody that would do what he has done," said Tim.

"Here's the man what's got some of old Miser White's cart wheels. How much did yer win yesterday? Reckon from what they say that you was one of the crowd that got some of Roy White's bundle," said Ame to Ike Glidden, who had just called upon his old friend Ansel.

"Oh, I didn't make much; anyway I didn't do any betting with Roy White. If he lost it must have been with that crowd of strangers he was with at the races," responded Ike.

"They say that Roy brought a new horse home with him ter-day when he came. S'pose he's a fast one, or he wouldn't have his legs all done up in bandages like he has."

"Yes, I saw him, and they say he's a trotter with a record," said Lickety Billings, who was sitting in the corner, industriously puffing on the end of a cheroot.

"That's nice di'men' they say that man what owns Bogan giv Jimmy as a trophy for winning the race," said Ame.

"Yes, Katy Brown was here to show it to me. Jimmy gave it to her to take care of for him," said Ike Glidden.

"S'pose Katy 'ill have that di'men' fer her own bumby," said Ansel.

"Yes, Jimmy Hope thinks the world of that girl, and there is every reason why he should after the way she stood by him during that trouble. Some girls wouldn't have stood by him as she did," said Tim.

“She’s a noble girl, and I tell you what, this whole community should be proud of her for the way she got us to overhaul that smuggler and find out the nature of his business,” said Ike.

“If it wasn’t for her we’d never found out but what it was Jimmy that robbed the old man,” said Ame.

“Well, it’s all right; it looks as though the whole community is proud of both of them, and she is entitled to the credit of it all,” said Ike, as he bade the boys “Good-night.”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RECEIPT.

THERE, I won't stand any more of that. You are always laughing at me," said Ike Glidden in a way of pleasant greeting to Mandy Garland one afternoon, as he drove up in front of the piazza, where a number of ladies were seated.

"Really, Mr. Glidden, how could we help laughing when we saw you coming, because we had just been talking about the joke you played on Mr. Blibbers at the picnic?"

"There, Mandy, that picnic of yours was certainly a great event. Everybody had a grand time, and downtown they are all telling about what a good time they had. But — ha! ha! ha! — Aime Blibbers ate so much ice-cream that he's had the doctor twice a day ever since, and the old man Blunt is threatened with palpitation of the heart, nervous prostration, or something of that kind, because Becca danced with Tim Cronin. Oh, that picnic was a great affair. Hope you'll have another one soon again, Mandy," said Ike.

"Yes, if it hadn't been for Mr. Cronin I guess Becca would have been so frightened she'd never lived to reach home," said one of the ladies.

"How was that?" inquired Ike.

"Oh, she thought she saw something move in the



MANDY GARLAND

bushes, back of where a crowd of us were sitting, and she made a leap and started to run. She made two jumps and then fell down. Tim rushed to where she was, and while picking her up she cried out, 'There, there, see it coming!' and he looked up and laughingly said, 'That's nothing; don't be afraid; it's nothing but a cow.' 'A cuc—cuc—cow!' chattered Becca, and when she had wiped the tears from her eyes sufficiently to make out the outlines of the cow, she exclaimed, 'Why, Tim, what a fool I am! It is only a cow.' Probably if she tells her father about how Tim saved her life, he will forgive her for accepting his attentions," and the crowd again laughed.

"But were you there when Squire Blunt drove up? You know he brought Becca up with his horse and carriage, and when she got out, and was reaching for her basket and some bundles and parcels she brought to the picnic, she found that the paper the pie was wrapped in was somewhat soiled and began to cry, and as I went up to speak to her she burst out, 'There, pa, you've stepped on that pie,' and taking the paper off another bundle she continued, 'Yes, an' there's the print of your shoe right across this sheet of cake, and the pie is all mashed, an' ain't fit ter use. What shall I do?' and of course I took her by the arm and tried to pacify by telling her we had lots of things, and not to cry. After her father returned home she stopped crying. Oh, she is a lovely girl, but her folks have petted her so much they've spoiled her," said Mandy, as they all repeated a laugh at the girlish ways of Becca Blunt.

After the merriment had somewhat subsided, and the

conversation was drifting into topics of more general interest, Mrs. Garland, whose mind seemed to be dwelling upon more serious matters, said, "Lawyer Glidden, do you remember having seen a receipt from Lazarus White among those papers I gave you when you were looking up the title to that land?"

"No, I don't seem to remember it; why? is it a matter of any importance to you?" returned Ike.

"It was a receipt for five hundred and some dollars, the amount due on a mortgage he held on my farm," responded Mrs. Garland.

"Was there anybody present when you paid him?"

"I can't exactly remember who were present. I sold a tract of blueberry land to get money with which to take up the mortgage, and I paid the money to Mr. White the same day I sold the land."

"Why, what about it, Mrs. Garland?"

"Oh, ho, his son Roy has been here with the mortgage, and it does not show that anything has ever been paid upon it, and I can't find the receipt, an' thought maybe it might got mixed in with those papers I gave you."

"Where were you at the time the money was paid?"

"It was in Ansel Hicks' store, and I think that Mr. Hicks and some others were there, but am not sure who the others might have been."

"Well, I think you needn't worry any about the matter. If Mr. Hicks was present at that time, you can easily prove that it has been paid if Roy should attempt to force the matter," advised Ike.

"Oh, Roy hasn't threatened to do anything about it, for I kind of think that he knows that it has been paid.

But you know before the picnic he came here several times to see Mandy, but ”— and with a sly glance at her daughter she continued — “I guess she didn’t give him much encouragement to come any more. Anyway she didn’t invite him to the picnic, and the day after the picnic he brought that mortgage up, I presume, to just remind us again that possibly he might have a lash over us. I told him that it had been paid, and he asked if I had a receipt. I told him that I had and would look it up. Then he called another day to see if I had found the receipt, and I had to tell him that I had been unsuccessful in the search. So now I don’t really know what he might attempt to do.”

“It seems strange that you did not get the mortgage from Lazarus when you paid the money,” said Ike.

“That may seem strange; but the day I paid him I met him out in front of Mr. Hicks’ store, and he didn’t say anything about not having the mortgage with him until he got the money into his hands. Then he said that he didn’t have it with him, but would bring it to me. That’s how he happened to give me the receipt, and it was written on a sheet of common writing-paper. But the mortgage he never brought to me as he agreed to do.”

“Yes, yes, I understand; he never gave up anything in the line of securities until he was obliged to do so,” said Ike.

“I thought many times I would go to his house and see him about the matter while he was sick, but kept putting it off until finally he died, and then I never thought any more about it until Roy came to see us

about the matter. Well, I hope there will be no trouble about it, anyway. But then one never can tell what is liable to happen."

The next day Ike sat in his office, thinking about the villainy of Roy White tormenting those people with that old mortgage claim, simply because his attentions were not acceptable to Mandy, and finally arose and commenced to examine some old files of papers and documents to see if it were possible that the receipt might have been folded in with the papers referred to by Mrs. Garland. He overhauled many old deeds, writs and documents, scrutinized every paper carefully, and was amply rewarded for the pains taken, for he found the valued receipt. Folding it into his wallet he said to himself, "There's the proof. I'll say nothing to anybody about finding it, and if Roy White ever attempts to press a claim under that old mortgage, I'll drive him out of court in disgrace."

A few weeks after the picnic, quartz rock was found on Mrs. Garland's land near the corner of her house. A sample of the rock was carried by one of her neighbors to Ike's office for him to examine. After he had inspected the specimen quite carefully, he began to laugh and said, "The extent of my experience as a geologist has been in determining the size and weight of the rocks on our old farm when we were tussling to remove them off the land, but then if my opinion on rocks and minerals is good for anything I should say that this is a very fair specimen of gold-bearing ore."

This off-hand favorable opinion from Ike, in a joking way, seemed to be as satisfactory to the man with the

rock sample as though his sample had been submitted to an expert. He accepted the remarks from Ike as being made with all sincerity, and returned home with the sensational news that there was really a gold mine on Mrs. Garland's farm. In less than a day there was a very enthusiastic crowd exploring and examining the rock heap and ledge near her house. They were all talking at once, all prophesying the Titanic strides by which the country was going to attain prosperity, and incidentally each owner of land in that vicinity was going to get rich along with it. They were trying to locate the vein, and thus determine upon which of the adjoining farms there might be a certainty of mineral deposits; but, while the white rock with specks of glittery metal appeared distinctly in one small place in the ledge, they seemed to be baffled to ascertain in which directions the vein seemed to run.

Along toward dark one of the party said, "I'll tell yer what we'll do. Let's get the min'ral rod."

"Where can we git one?" anxiously said another.

"Ho, hain't ther one down to ther village; yer know ther time some fortin-teller came here and sed what there wuz money buried down on ther shore near the dyke. The town 'ppriated some money ter buy one o' them min'ral rods, an' Squire Blunt was 'pinted one of the committee ter see ter gettin' the rod, and managin' ther business o' diggin' fer ther hidden pot o' money. If they got it they wuz goin' ter build ther railroad. P'raps he's got the rod now, and we'll git him ter cum up an' try it."

"Well, what's ther good of that? it didn't find ther

hidden pot o' gold fer 'em, an' what's the use o' us gettin' it?"

"That's nawthin'. The trouble was that they couldn't keep from a-talkin' while a-diggin'. Yer know in diggin' fer buried treasure, yer musn't speak, or ther box or whatever it's in 'ill change its location, an' then yer can't find it at all. They only worked nights, 'cause it's sed yer know that the night's the best time for diggin' treasure, and ther darker ther better. Well, on two or three times, while a-carryin' on the work, they were quite sure that they cum onter ther pot, but some on 'em couldn't keep quiet. The fust time they struck the pot was an awful night, ther wind was a-blowin' and it wuz a-rainin' a little, and jest about the time they thought the spade touched onter it, one o' them 'tarnel screech owls was in a tree right closs ter where they wuz a-diggin', an' let a howl out o' it what was 'nough ter frighten any one, and Joe Sampson an' ther hull o' them fergot themselves and said something. The pot shifted, and they didn't find no trace o' it agin that night. The next time they tried it was 'bout a week later, and 'twas all agreed not one on 'em wuz ter speak no matter what happened. But afore they went down that evenin' Bill Morley had taken two or three geysers o' whiskey, an' t'others didn't know it, and about the time they shoved an iron bar down in ther right place and struck the pot o' gold, Bill whispered ter Joe, an' says, 'By hookey, Joe, we've got it this time sure; wish t'I'd bro't down a pint, an' we'd take a drink ter cel'brate our grate luck,' and Joe wuz so mad 'cause Bill spoke that he blurted out, 'Bill Morley, you're a fool; couldn't

yer hold yer tongue until we got our hands onter ther money?' and then ther pot shifted again. The next time I heerd about them tryin' wuz late in ther fall, an' they had sunk ther crowbar on all sides o' ther pot what ther money wuz in, and they wuz all a-tusslin' away an' a-diggin' fer all they wuz worth, and Joe Sampson wuz half froze, and he got so excited that he fergot himself, an' spoke ter Squire Blunt an' asked him ter lend him a pair o' mitts, and the rest o' 'em with that flew inter a rage and threatened ter lick Joe 'cause he couldn't keep quiet, an' ther pot shifted agin. So if they didn't git ther pot o' money, 'twan't no fault o' ther min'ral rod, 'twas 'cause they couldn't hol' their tongues long enough ter git ther hands onter ther money."

Yes, I remember 'bout them tellin' about it, an' they sed the reason they didn't dig no more was 'cause ther old squire and some o' his 'lations did the diggin' themselves, and got the money and kept it."

"Prob-rably that when he got the money he invested in gov'tment bonds."

They, however, sent for Squire Blunt to come and bring the magical operating rod and assist in the search for the direction in which the vein extended. In fact, they were so deeply interested that explorations were continued until late in the evening. Ike Glidden, when driving to the house of Mrs. Garland, noticed the brilliancy near the end of her house, and wondered what the reason was for the unusual illumination, and as he drew nearer, he saw that the light was from a dozen or more lanterns in the hands of people that were evidently looking for something that had been lost. The myste-

rious scene excited his curiosity, and he hastened to ask Mandy and her mother the cause of the unusual actions of their neighbors.

Mrs. Garland inquired if he had not seen a sample of the gold that had been found there, and asked further if he had not expressed an opinion as to the value of the mineral. Ike, in response, said, "Why, that was what they call fool's gold; it possesses no value: I hope what I said to that man who brought the sample to me had nothing to do with causing all this excitement."

"Lawyer Glidden, I certainly think it had; isn't there any value in the rock?"

"No, I don't think there is."

"What a joke to play on these poor men that have spent the whole day in tugging, lifting and rolling rocks! Now they are out there this evening with lanterns, trying to trace the vein, and they've sent for Squire Blunt to come up here in the morning, with a mineral rod, to assist them. Mr. Glidden, I wish that you would go and tell them it's all a joke."

"No," said Ike, with a smile extending across his face, "let them satisfy their curiosity. Perhaps there is some value in those rocks. My opinion is of no more value on such matters than your own would be. Mrs. Garland."

The next morning a very large crowd had flocked there to view the spot where so much mineral wealth was supposed to exist. Squire Blunt faithfully responded to the call, and came bringing the mineral rod with him, fully prepared to perform the miracles of a wizard. Ike was there simply for amusement, and the

opinions being expressed by those who seemed to be directing the enterprise seemed to give him great pleasure. Occasionally some of them would refer to him for an opinion, and he invariably approved of whatever course they seemed to have determined upon. Finally, the squire commenced the operation of locating the mine, and it was evident, from the actions of the bob on the end of the line, that he had been successful the first time, and had set the apparatus squarely over the valuable deposit; but the direction in which the rod indicated the course of the vein was directly under Mrs. Garland's house. The problem of operating a shaft, if the vein should run under the house, was troubling them. They were so much interested in the project of opening and developing the find that a bystander would naturally think that they were intending to commence operations at once,—even before permission had been obtained from Mrs. Garland.

The crowd were standing around the front door of the house, consulting with each other as to the most feasible manner of carrying on work; and about the time some one suggested that it would be necessary to move the house in order to make a successful test of the mineral value of the newly discovered mine, and Ike approved of the suggestion, the crowd around the door began to huddle together in order to make room for some person to enter. It was Roy White, with a vengeful look upon his face, elbowing his way to the door where Mrs. Garland and her daughter were standing.

“Are you ready to pay me the amount of this mort-

gage?" said Roy, in a bold and insulting manner, as he stood looking at the woman's countenance for a reply.

"Please, Mr. White, wait until to-morrow, and I'll see what I can do about the matter," said she in a voice trembling with nervous fear.

"I cannot wait another minute; I come to demand payment from you of the amount of this mortgage I hold here in my hands. I insist that you pay me without further delay, or I shall foreclose and take possession," returned Roy in an irritable tone of voice.

"Roy, you should not be so hasty; why don't you give this lady a chance? she can hire the money, and I know she will pay you," said one of the men.

"I don't want none of your advice. This is my property; you get off my property. This house, this land, and this mine, is my property," said Roy in a rage.

Ike advanced forward, laid his hand on Roy's shoulder and said, "That mortgage has been paid, and your acts are those of a knave. Surrender that mortgage to Mrs. Garland, and leave these premises instantly, or I'll —!" Ike was about to express himself in language more forcible than elegant, when he thought of the presence of the ladies and checked his words abruptly.

"It has never been paid," cried out Roy in an offensive and defiant manner, "and I'll stay here so long as I please so to do. It is my farm, and, Ike Glidden, I order you and every one of this crowd to leave these premises at once."

Ike's manly spirit was aroused, and he felt like picking up the intruder and throwing him bodily outside of the gate; but his firm temper held control of his nerves,

while his large black eyes emitted gleams of fire, and he simply smiled in his wrath at the cruel manner Roy had approached Mrs. Garland in the presence of a crowd. Quietly reaching his hand into his pocket he withdrew a piece of paper, and held it to the crowd and said, "Gentlemen, that mortgage has been paid and here is the receipt."

"It is a lie; it has not been paid. Ike Glidden, that receipt is only a bogus one, and I charge you with forgery."

"Here, Squire Blunt, is the receipt," said Ike, as he passed the precious piece of paper to him, "Look at it, and say whether or not the signature of Lazarus White is genuine."

After looking over it the squire made the declaration in loud and positive accents, "It is all written in the handwriting of Lazarus White; every word on the receipt is in his writing, and I say 't the receipt's genuine."

"Yes, and I was in Ansel Hicks' store when it was paid, and heard Lazarus tell Mrs. Garland he'd bring the mortgage up ter her the fust time he druv up this way," said Sile Lombard.

"Leave these premises," said Ike, "or are you waiting to be helped out into the roadway?"

"That isn't my father's signature," said Roy.

"Yes, it is, Roy, and you'd better give up that mortgage to Mrs. Garland and leave this yard, and not create any more disturbance," said the squire in a conciliatory tone.

"No, I won't do anything of the kind; this mine is

my property, and I own this farm, and I'll stay here so long as I've a mind to do so," continued Roy.

"Sile Lombard, constable and keeper of the public peace, I order you ter 'rrest Roy White fer disturbin' ther peace o' mind o' Mrs. Garland, an' she can't put up with his nonsence no longer," commanded the squire; "he must be either drunk or crazy."

While Sile was hustling him out of the yard Roy began to realize the viciousness of his conduct, and tried to make a treaty with the officer to release him by declaring, "The receipt is all right; it is my father's signature. Let me go, and I'll give up the mortgage to Mrs. Garland, but the officer jostled him out through the gate. Sile then said to him, "Well, give me the mortgage, and I'll let you go."

Roy handed him the document and got into his carriage and drove away, while the multitude of people that had gathered there jeered and hooted the wayward and imprudent young man for attempting to swindle a widow woman out of her home.

When the crowd had quieted down, and again resumed the search for a more positive indication of the drift of the vein, and Squire Blunt was about to make another test with the mineral rod, Ike, thinking that the joke about the mine had been carried far enough, said in fun, "Gentlemen, Mrs. Garland has agreed to sell the mineral rights of this property to a syndicate of New York capitalists, that propose to come here and open a shaft within a short time, and I would suggest that it may not be advisable to pursue your explorations any further, for fear it might interfere with getting those people to

carry out the plan they now have under consideration. Let us wait until they come before any blasts are put into the ledge."

They accordingly conceded to the suggestion, and abandoned the mine, to await the action of the capitalists, and patiently waited operations to be commenced by them. But it is not strange to say that their wait did not satisfy their expectations, for the mine was never opened.

CHAPTER XXII.

ROY WHITE'S TROTTER.

ROY WHITE did not inherit any of his father's propensities for accumulating money, but what he lacked in that particular he made up in conceit and dissipation. He wore fine clothes, smoked good cigars, and took pride in driving fast horses.

A few weeks after he made an extravagant purchase of a horse in Bar Harbor, that had been represented to have a mark in the "teens," he drove up in front of Ansel Hicks' store, and inquired if Lawyer Glidden had been there since morning.

"No, hain't seen nothin' of him since he driv past here just after the mail come in," said Ansel.

"By gosh, Roy, if yer hain't got a dandy team there; bet that feller can shake a wagon pretty fast," said one of the loafers on the steps.

"This horse I bought for a trotter, and since I have driven him I've become satisfied that he can beat out any horse in the State," boastingly said Roy.

"That's pretty good colt o' Deacon Squirm's," ventured Ansel.

"That tunkle-headed thing! what's he good for 'ceptin' for an old woman ter drive? He's good 'nough s'pose for him and his wife, but he hain't got no speed," said Roy.

"I'll bet you a bottle of ginger-ale, Roy, that the deacon's colt can beat any horse in this county," mirthfully said one of the boys.

"Yes, and the deacon offers to race with any horse in town," jokingly added another.

"Didn't suppose the deacon would race horses," said Roy.

"Oh, he wouldn't race for money, but he says it's no harm to race for glory," teasingly said another.

Driving away from his tormentors Roy said, "Will you tell Deacon Squirm or anybody else in the district that, when they care to match horses for money or glory, they can arrange terms with me."

"He thinks we're in dead earnest. Didn't think yer could bother him so easy's that," said one of the boys after Roy had driven away.

"Bother him! why, he's dead easy; bet that's an old broken-down trotter that he's had plastered on ter him, and can't trot no more'n a farm horse," said another.

"P'raps he might go quarter a mile or so at good clip, but would quit before he got to a full half," said another.

"I b'lieve, layin' all jokes aside, that the deacon's colt would give him a hard one."

"Let's see if we can't have some fun and get them tergether."

"Oh, bosh, the deacon wouldn't race with nobody.

"Deuce, he wouldn't. Let's see the lawyer, and let him in on ther joke, and he'll fix the deacon so he'll be all right."

"Well, 'tis no more harm fer the deacon ter race than

'tis for Mrs. Squirm. Saw her a-comin' down by the post-office t'other day, leading a race with a roan horse, and she was just a-sendin' all the dust inter the roan that he could stand under."

Ike had always been popular with the boys about town, because he was so ready to join them on any occasion that promised merriment. Therefore the suggestion of a match race readily met with his hearty approval; the prospect of an endless amount of fun in the match, if the colt should happen to beat Roy's horse, really awakened him.

"Yes, boys, shouldn't wonder if Roy's horse could go pretty fast for a half-mile or so, but I'll bet he'd then quit. If the colt's only got wind enough to hold out, I b'lieve he'd beat the trotter in a three-heat race."

"Cal'late it 'ud be hard ter get the deacon inter the game," said one of the boys.

"Don't worry about that; I can fix him. He'll do anything I tell him to, all right."

"He'd be afear'd of the church folks. If we'd get him ter promise ter race ther colt, ev'ry ole woman in the deestrick 'ud be after him, so he'd be scairt out," said another.

"He usually depends on me for advice in most matters, and I think I can get the old fellow to let us have the colt, even if he does not care to have his name mixed up with a horse race," said Ike.

"When will you see him?" anxiously said one of the party.

"I'll go right up and have a talk with him, and then we'll know whether it's a go or not."

"All right, Mr. Glidden; we'll wait down to Ansel's until you get back."

Ike drove to the bottling works and saw the deacon. After discussing several matters of minor importance he opened up the matter.

"Deacon Squirm, Roy White says your colt is only fit for a woman to drive. He sneers at the statement that the colt's speedy, and we would like to take the colt and get up a little match with Roy," said Ike.

"Sneers 'bout my colt, does he? Guess if I caught him on the road I'd give him some dust to sneer at."

"That's so, deacon, guess you'd do all that, but we were afraid you'd be a little shy about racing horses, and we thought —"

"Shy, guess I wouldn't be shy of any horse 'round here a-beatin' me."

"No, I know that, but I did not mean it in that sense. We want to get up a race. Would you be willing to race with him. If you wouldn't I'd pretend to buy the colt from you, and I'd arrange the terms of a race in my name, so that the people could not criticise you for racing horses."

"Willin', I ain't afear'd of gettin' beat. Don't yer worry 'bout me gettin' scairt of bein' criticised for gettin' beat. They can't beat the colt I tell you.

"Deacon, I didn't mean that at all; it was something else I was alluding to. Are you agreeable to a match between your colt and Roy White's Spanish Coin if I will arrange a race? And I wish to know if you will agree to match your colt against his horse?"

"Yes, sirree, I will; or, I'll tell you now, yer can bet

all ther money you've got that American Dollar can beat Spanish Coin in the mornin' afore he's had his fodder."

"Is that what you call the colt, — American Dollar? Didn't know that before."

"Well, I didn't either, but a-bein' as Roy calls his horse Spanish Coin, just thought I'd call mine American Dollar ter be patriotic yer know."

"Good enough; now I'll go down and get some of the boys to lay for Roy and get him into line for a match. Good afternoon, deacon; I'll see you just as soon as the thing is fixed," said Ike as he drove away.

Ike told the boys about the deacon's willingness, and satisfied them that the matter was all right. Then came the all-important part of the scheme, — "How can we arrange to get Roy into a contest?" said one of the boys.

"Oh, that's easy; a couple of you fellows wait for Roy to-morrow when he comes for his mail, and one of you brag up his horse, and while one is puffing him up, another of you say, 'Lawyer Glidden says Deacon Squirm's colt can beat yours any day, and offered to bet one hundred dollars that he could.'

"Then you'll have him worked up to a fever heat, and I'll come along while your talking, and one of you ask me if it's true that I said so, and from that on you'll see how hot-headed he'll be when I tell him that I said it and that I mean every word of it. There'll be no trouble to arrange a bet; you'll see how he'll tumble into it," said Ike.

He knew that Roy was impulsive and conceited, and

could not stand such a blunt challenge about the merits of his new trotting horse, and would readily enter into the contest when once they defied him.

The bet was made, the money was deposited in the hands of the post-master, and the day fixed for a match race.

"Who'll drive the colt? The deacon's no hand to drive. You'll have to do that yourself, Mr. Glidden," said one of the party while they were discussing plans for the race.

"No, I could not drive him, but will send and get an experienced driver to handle the colt. We'll get some one who understands his business," responded Ike.

"Who can you get? do you know of anybody?" said another.

"No, but I'll telephone to Bangor, and learn the name of some reliable man that we can get."

"Faith, an' oi'll tell yer the wan ter git. Sind fer Jimmy,—Jimmy Hope, he's the wan," said Dennis Bogan.

"He's just the chap," cried out almost every one of them.

Communication was opened by telephone with Jimmy, who was then at work in Bar Harbor, and in the course of a few days he came to get the colt in readiness for the great contest that was programmed to take place in Blueberry Falls.

Squire Blunt, evidently alarmed at the deacon's sporting spirit, called on him one afternoon and said, "You know, Deacon Squirm, that Roy White has got the crack of the whole State. His trotter is thoroughly

trained, — keyed up to the top notch. I saw him this morning, and he looks as fit as though he was prepared to trot any horse, instead of an untrained green country colt. Things don't look right; I'm 'fraid some one's a-foolin' you into this scrape."

"Bosh! don't know what you're a-drivin' at."

"I mean just this, that I b'lieve that Lawyer Glidden and Roy White's puttin' up chances ter play a trick on you."

"Trick! don't you be afeared of Mr. Glidden or of me a-gettin' beat."

"That's a trickster, I b'lieve, and you'll find him out to be one. He's in with Roy White just as sure as the sun shines."

"Mr. Glidden's a gen'leman, and my colt can beat the best trotter Roy White ever did own or ever will own. I'd thank people ter mind their own business and let my colt alone," said the deacon indignantly, because he felt that the colt's speed had been brought into question.

It was useless to try to shake the deacon's confidence in the colt or in Lawyer Glidden, so the squire consoled himself during the remainder of the call by talking about other matters. It was of no use; the deacon was keyed up as well as Roy's trotter, and was as game as a rooster.

The race was to take place about three miles from the village, in a large open field, where a track had been laid out the summer before.

The young men in the district desired a place where they might drive and break their colts, and they leveled off this field, turned a race course in it, and secured a

fairly good track. It was not such a track as one sees at Readfield, but it would serve the purpose of the event that was to take place.

The match was the talk of the district, and for many miles beyond it, and long before the appointed hour people from miles around had arrived on the field. The better class in the district had fostered the spirit of the day and had come in crowded carriages.

The Squirms, the Duncans, the Garlands, the Rankins, the Bogans and all the leading families were in attendance. The farmers came early, with their families, and watched the race course since morning, providing against hunger and thirst by the big picnic baskets filled with good things, and even the horsemen and sporting fraternity of the city came to witness the contest upon which they had wagered large sums.

Before the race started Spanish Coin was a decided favorite with the out-of-town horsemen at odds of two to one. Many wagers at these odds on the result of the race were placed by the Bar Harbor contingent, until they were bet to a standstill by a party of residents headed by Ike Glidden.

Spanish Coin was the first to appear on the track, and American Dollar came out almost immediately after him. Both horses and drivers were given a hearty reception, the applause rather favoring the old trotter.

They went around the track several times, warming up preparatory to the race, Spanish Coin acting as though he could trot just as fast as he pleased, while the colt went a trifle awkward.

The appearance of the horses during the preliminary

work caused the knowing ones to prophesy that the colt had no prospect to win. After the horses had been jogged around several times the judges called the drivers up to the rude platform that was designated the "judges' stand," and flipped a penny to determine the position the horses should be entitled to on the track at the start, and when the copper was picked up Roy gave his whip a firmer grip and walked away quickly. Jimmy Hope had won the toss, and his colt drew the pole that went with it. This stroke apparently gave the friends of the colt more confidence in the result, as drawing the pole was a position evidently in favor of the colt. Cheers went up from Ike Glidden and his associates.

The drivers each mounted their sulkies, and went up the stretch and turned about a hundred yards from the starting wire stretched across from the judges' stand. They scored twice, and on the second score they were given the word "go!" and went away under great speed. "They're off! they're off!" was the cry from the throats of hundreds of interested people. The horses were off in earnest, struggling for honors and purse. They went along steadily, with scarcely a break in the gait of either, each holding the position held on the start, until near the upper corner on the back stretch, when the colt broke and his head went up into the air. The excitement seemed to rattle him and he lost his balance. Spanish Coin shot a length ahead of him before he could be steadied down. To use a trainer's expression Spanish Coin literally tramped upon him throughout the remainder of the heat. Spanish Coin captured the heat in impressive style, amidst prolonged and enthusiastic cheers and great excitement.

"Take the colt home and bring out one of Deacon Squirm's milk cows," shouted out Lickety Billings.

"Yes, yer colt can't trot no more than a two-year-old heifer," cried out Bluster Rankin to the deacon.

"Niver you mind, deacon, the colt's just getting acquainted. The old trotter's wind will soon give out, and thin ye'll see how the colt'll bate him out," said Dennis Bogan to the deacon, in a somewhat consoling and sympathetic tone.

"What do you know about horses, you old bog trotter," said one of Roy's friends to Dennis, for the purpose of taunting him.

"Tell him, Dennis, that you know enough about them this time to be backing a horse that is gaining and has enough wind to finish a race," said Ike.

"Who'd pay attinshun ter them scapegoats? Shure and thim fellers is alwuz on the wrong side of ivery thing," said Dennis.

"What those fellows say, Dennis, is not worth paying any attention to, and I'd let them shout."

"Maybe the colt is going ter get beat, Dennis, so I'd keep quiet," said the deacon, who was becoming discouraged since the colt lost the first heat.

"Don't you be afther gettin' waik in the knees; bless me sowl! ther colt's got more wind than the whole of thim 'cept Bluster. I lint him farty dollars one time, an' whin I axed him fer it, he called me all the mane creeturs yer iver heerd. That's what's the matter with him. But I'd lind him another farty if I was shure ov ther colt batin' ther throtter. Daycan, it bates ther divil how thim vagabon's kape round that disayse ol'

trotter. There isn't a daycent wan av the byes here but what is wid ther colt, daycan," said Dennis.

In time the shouting and provoking taunts ended, and the crowd began to look forward to the commencement of the next chapter of the race.

In the second heat American Dollar had scarcely a skip charged against him, and the crowd felt that there was something mysterious in the manner in which he began to lead the experienced trotter, after they were but a few lengths from the wire. The colt showed a wonderful burst of speed, and seemed to hold up his clip with great pluck and assurance. Roy attempted to apply the whip and force his horse up onto the colt, but when rounding into the home stretch his horse broke, and suddenly went to a wild swerving break that carried him to the complete outside of the track. It was needless to urge him; he required speed more than he did the whip to carry him to victory.

"Whe-e-ew! whe-e-ew! Look at Spanish Coin!" cried one of the impulsive adherents of Roy's horse.

The break settled the result of the heat, as all the colt had to do was to hold to his clip to the wire. Cheers, yells, hurrahs for Jimmy, filled the air. The colt won the heat. The deacon was crazed with pride. Dennis, swinging his hat, was making himself hoarse, "What d'yer think of that, Bluster?" The boys were wild with excitement. Betting began anew, and the stock of the colt went up to an even mark with the old trotter. The cheers and greets of Katy Brown, "I know'd you'd beat him, Jim!" were drowned in the commotion that was created by the animated throng,

gathered around the winner of the heat, to shower flattery and praises on the colt and driver. There was more than one row by some of the pugnacious ones who considered their opinions infallible, and did not propose to have them questioned; but there was nothing really serious. The horses were called for the next heat and quietness again reigned supreme. The eager crowd waited, with hearts beating, to see the exploits of the coming test, which would decide the battle.

When the horses were called up to start in the third and final heat they got the word "go!" on the first time they scored down to the wire. American Dollar looked his best as he led the way down to the back stretch, trotting with barely a ripple in his action, and with his thin, blood-like ears pricked and playing cheerfully like a horse that is enjoying a spin. Spanish Coin braced up a bit, and the tall, rakish-looking horse, with ears laid back sulkily, began to gain slowly, yet steadily, on the breezy little colt he was chasing. When rounding the upper turn Spanish Coin drove wide, and on swinging into the head of the home stretch was trotting a storm. As he struck the straight work he was half a head by the colt. The friends of Roy's horse went wild with delight. The colt developed another burst, that had evidently been held in reserve, and went faster than he had ever done at any other stage of the race. The horse was holding steady up to his clip, but it could be easily seen that he was "all in," and the colt was just holding his position with him. It did not seem that the colt would have the luck to win. Another burst from the colt, and he was head and head with the horse.

The horse struggled gamily. Then came the decisive moment, when the conquering colt swept under the wire by a nose ahead of the trotter, and all decorum was brushed aside. The extreme excitement, cheers and yells were beyond comprehension. They shouted, yelled, and it was pandemonium unrestrained. A scene of wildest confusion ensued, when the judges announced, "American Dollar wins the heat and race."

Men and women both swarmed out to the track, and surrounded Jimmy, and again cheered for the colt and the boy driver.

"I can't get near Jimmy to give him this bouquet of flowers. Won't you be kind enough, Mr. Glidden, to hand it to him?" said Katy Brown, as she elbowed her way through the multitude, trying to get within sight of the boy that she admired.

"Let me get my arms 'round that colt's neck. He's a darlin'," cried Mrs. Squirm, as she pushed herself into the circle of people gathered round the champion of the race.

"I know'd he'd beat," yelled out the deacon, as he shook hands with Ike in a hearty and exhilaratory manner.

"How minny o' their chaps is wid Roy now. It's aisy ter see how minny frien's the ould throtter has now. Not even wan iv them is wid him; he's all alone. Poor fellow! it's too bad; won't some wan be koind enough fer ther sake of the poor baste ter go and help im put the blanket on his old nag. Where is his friend Bluster?" said Dennis Bogan, so elated at the result of the race that he was trying to take colt, driver and sulky in his arms.

"Oh, Bluster and his chums are in that crowd you see starting for home," said Ike.

The result of the race created a sensation among the horsemen present.

"How much will you take for that colt?" inquired one of them of the deacon.

"I'll keep him 's long's I live; wouldn't be tempted ter sell him for any money."

The close of the day was one of the happiest ever felt by Ike, and one of the proudest in the simple and uneventful life of Deacon Squirm, and the result of the race probably had a tendency to take from Roy the desire to pose as king of the road.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BURGLARY.

THE days were full of diversion and excitement for Ike in his rôle of lawyer and two years sped by as on lightning wing. During this time he had established a reputation as a collector second only to his fame as an adjuster of grievances between the country people and to his common-sense method of expounding the law.

Twice he had journeyed to the old home; once to redeem the mortgage that threatened his mother's home, and again to do a like service for the Jones family, whose homestead was all but lost to them by the lapse of an insignificant mortgage given by Jones ere his health failed and his boy Dicky went off to the West never to return.

While Ike was proud of his success as a lawyer he took still greater pride in the fact of his having been the instigator of Deacon Squirm's highly successful enterprise. He gave much of his attention to the deacon's affairs, and consequently called there frequently to advise with him as to the proper methods by which to obtain the best results in conducting the "bitter industry."

In the course of a few months after Deacon Squirm's extravagant purchase of the large safe, two strangers came to Squirmtown. One came ostensibly for his

health, and the other was his companion and attendant. Both were much interested in religious work, and attended and took an active part in all the meetings held in the village. They were guests at the hotel, and after a while complained to the deacon about the board, and asked if he would kindly take them to his house for a few weeks, assuring him that it would be a favor money could not measure. As they were Christians he of course sympathized with them, and very willingly invited them to make their home with him during the remainder of their stay.

During the first part of their sojourn with the deacon special pains were taken to show them about the house and the bottling establishment to impress them with the extraordinary sign of the deacon's wealth, and their prayers were offered that he might always be prosperous and have abundance.

The greater part of their time was given to strolling about the groves and over the hills, little of it being spent with the deacon or his wife, except during meal hours.

The guests received a letter one morning that brought the sad intelligence of the death of the brother of the invalid boarder, and arrangements were made for a hasty departure. They paid the deacon liberally for board and entertainment, and in addition prayed that Mr. and Mrs. Squirm would always have the blessing of a kind providence for the hospitality bestowed on them during their stay in the village.

When they had departed Mrs. Squirm expressed great sorrow for the poor individual that had been called to

witness the burial of a brother, and the deacon declared, "If there ever wuz two Christians, both of 'em gen'lemen be."

The deacon was extremely busy each day in his rapidly expanding business, and had little time to give thoughts to the proper care of the large amount of money that he received in return for the great shipments of bitters. He believed that the money was reasonably secure in the new safe, but sometimes felt a sense of anxiety about it. He neglected, however, for several weeks to deposit his funds at a bank, so that quite a sum of money was accumulating.

Although he occasionally felt a little alarmed about having the money there he was so engrossed in the details of his work that his going to the city to place his money with a banking institution was strangely delayed.

Ike Glidden and Mandy Garland were invited to the deacon's to tea, and while there the deacon became quite confidential with Ike and told him how he had neglected to go to the bank for some weeks. He spoke of some little uneasiness he was beginning to foster about the safety of such an amount of money in that rural community, and declared that he must go to the city the next day and attend to his banking business.

Ike manifested great surprise at the deacon's practice of keeping large sums of money in an ordinary safe. When he was leaving he advised the deacon not to delay such an important trip, and urged him to be sure and go the next day and deposit his money regardless of other business engagements.

That night about half-past eleven o'clock Mrs. Squirm

awoke with a sudden start, and poking the deacon in the ribs said, "Deacon, what on earth's that noise? Sounds like's a cannon went off. Wonder what it can be?"

The deacon, almost fast asleep, answered, "Oh, it's nawthin' but the sound of a gun. Maybe some of the boys is out a-shootin' deer," and then they both dozed off and slept soundly until morning.

In the morning when the hired man came to open the bottling works he saw that the glass in one of the windows of the building was broken, and upon entering the building found that the doors had been blown off the safe, and that its contents were scattered over the floor. He immediately went to inform the deacon of the robbery, who without waiting to answer his wife's curious and nervous questions, in his excitement started in his nightshirt to the scene of the depredation.

It was not long until the whole neighborhood had gathered, and the most intense excitement prevailed. A search among the papers and contents of the safe failed to reveal bank books, precious documents and valuable papers intrusted by the people throughout the district to the deacon for safe-keeping.

The men who had intrusted their securities to Deacon Squirm were frantic with excitement; many of them accused the deacon of planning to rob them, and while the deacon wrung his hands and tore his hair over his own immediate loss, many among them were planning to lynch the deacon or to torture him into confession.

"If only Lawyer Glidden was here," said the deacon in his misery.

"Send for him to help us to find the robbers."

"Ike Glidden?" spoke up Bluster Rankin; "I met him on the road to Bangor and he was driving like all possessed. I hailed him, but he made no reply."

Immediately the excitement was intensified. Several hastened in to Blueberry Falls to see if any light could be shed upon Ike's actions. They returned with information that solved the mystery. Ike Glidden left Blueberry Falls in the dead of night, driving like mad, and without a word to anybody to explain his sudden departure. "There's where our money has gone," explained Deacon Squirm. "We've nursed a viper, and he's stung us." The mysterious disappearance of Ike caused general consternation.

"I knowed all the time that he was a crook," said Lickety Billings. "He had all the marks of it; when I see a crook I know it; you can't fool me."

"You must make a close study of yourself," said Dennis Bogan, "to be so well eddicated, and to be so well up on the knowledge about crooks; and you, Deacon Squirm, if it wasn't that you practised hypocrisy all yer life you'd know an honest man when yer saw one. Oike Glidden is not a robber, and you'll find it out some time."

"Hear that gabblin' old Irishman," said Bluster Rankin. "Ike Glidden must er spoke pleasant to him some time, and Ike could commit any crime after that and Dennis couldn't see any harm in it. Can't tell me he ain't a thief. I remember how he soaked me every time I put any confidence in him."

"Go 'long, you mane lot of people, ter be puttin' this

on that man. Oike Glidden niver chated a widder woman out of her oundly hoss. If you had what's coming to ye, it's a long while ago you'd be talkin' through the bars yersilf."

"Well, I don't know," said Ansel Hicks. "Glidden always struck me as a peculiar character. He came here an entire stranger; nobody ever hearn tell of him afore, and no one ever could find out where he came from. He did get ahead mighty fast. If he didn't rob that safe what did he run away for?"

"Honest men don't run away," said Ame Blibbers.

"Let's offer a reward for the capture of Ike Glidden, dead or alive," said Ben Duncan.

"The Lord give yer sense, yer pack of tin-faced idiots," said Dennis, as he left the crowd in disgust and wended his way homeward.

Notice of the robbery was forwarded to all the cities, and a reward was posted for the capture of Ike Glidden.

About a week after the burglary Deacon Squirm received a telegram from the chief of police in Boston, asking him to go there at once and identify a strange character held on suspicion for robbing his safe, and to prove ownership of certain property found in his possession. A report spread throughout the district like wild-fire that they had arrested Ike Glidden. The deacon was hurried off in response to the request of the authorities in Boston, and on his arrival there he said to the officer, "Got that Glidden, have yer?"

"Yes, if that's his name."

"Le'm me see him," continued the deacon, as they proceeded to the cell where the prisoner was confined.

"Ho, this is the man what was boardin' with me. This man never did nothin' like that; he's a Christian and I can vouch for him. This is too bad to have an honest man in here. Ain't yer got Glidden? He's the man we're after."

"No, this is the only man we've got, and the way we happened to get this sanctimonious-looking chap was through a policeman at the Northern Depot. As the Montreal express train, that runs up through the Vermont division, was hauling out, a man, hurrying to get the train, said to the policeman, 'Here's a crook ahead of me boarding that train; arrest him, and search his grip and I think you'll find he's got some plunder that he took from a place in Maine that was burglarized.'

"The policeman promptly arrested him, seized his grip and searched him, and found a number of articles in it that looked suspicious, and as he was unable to make any satisfactory explanation of his vocation he was locked up in hopes that he might be able to connect him with some of the breaks in Maine that were being reported. While arresting the minister the policeman called to the stranger that gave him the tip to remain and give him some further information about the prisoner, but the train was just then hauling out, and all the policeman could hear was, 'My mother's sick and I can't stay over until the next train. He robbed a safe in —, Maine.' The name of the place where the robbery had taken place the policeman did not seem to comprehend.

"How did yer come ter send fer me?" inquired the deacon.

"We found your name in several of the documents in his grip, and then concluded to telegraph for you to come and see if the articles had been stolen from you," said the official.

"Documents yer found in his grip belongin' ter me! Guess yer must er be mistakin'. I didn't give him nothin' of the kind when he was down there. Him and 'nother man, his companion, was down to my place and boarded with me, and they are real gen'lemen. Don't think it can be possible fer any one ter b'lieve either of them gen'lemen oughter be locked up. Think it's too bad ter be keepin' him locked up; it's Mr. Glidden we want," said the deacon, even then not willing to believe the prisoner had anything to with the robbing of his safe.

"There was another man the policeman thought was with him when he made the arrest. The matter came up in such a hurry, just as the train was about to leave, that he had no opportunity to call another officer or probably he'd also have had his companion. We were lucky to get him when we did, as he had a ticket for Montreal in his pocket. Here's some of the stuff we found in his valise; did you ever see any of it before?" said the officer.

"By Criminy, if here ain't ther things stole out o' my safe the night I was robbed," cried the deacon in utter astonishment when he saw the contents of the minister's grip. It was with some little difficulty that the officer convinced the deacon that the valuables were found in the possession of the prisoner, and that the ministerial-appearing individual was a man with an established police record, and was well known to the guardians of the peace in nearly all the principal cities.

Deacon Squirm returned from Boston in a high state of jubilation, with all the funds and valuable documents that had been taken from his safe. Squirmtown and the surrounding country was convulsed with joy and wonder at the mysterious turn of affairs, but still the suspicion clung to Ike. Everybody with the exception of Dennis Bogan, Tim Cronin and Jimmy Hope expressed their belief that Ike's disappearance was connected with the robbery and that he had been in league with the man arrested, and had taken himself off to avoid discovery and arrest.

While the excitement attending the discovery of the burglary had been at its highest pitch, Tim Cronin, half stupefied with drink, lounged about the villages, taking about as much interest in affairs as would a man walking in his sleep. But gradually it dawned upon Tim that Ike's name was under a cloud, and when he heard Ike's reputation assailed it aroused him from his lethargy like a galvanic shock.

"Look here now," said he to the crowd that sat in Ansel Hicks' store, busily convicting Ike of a crime, "Look here now, Tim Cronin never prided himself that he was a saint. I've been a disgrace to my decent parents, that did all their honest hearts could do to make a decent man of me, and I hain't much credit to any town or to any man, but thank God I haven't descended yet to that level reached by you, who call yourselves respectable. I never slandered a man; I never searched for circumstantial evidence to pin suspicion to one whose life, so far as this community knows, has been one of charity and honesty and manliness. And I

want to say to you here, one and all of you, that the next man who says a word against Ike Glidden's character has got to fight. You understand what that means," said Tim, glaring around at each individual, "and I ain't particular how soon the fight begins."

The owner of the building in which Ike had his office complained that, if he should fail to receive some money without further delay in payment of the rent that had accrued, he would be obliged to sell the furniture and books at sheriff's sale.

"How much is due you?" demanded Dennis Bogan, who chanced to hear the threatening remark of the landlord.

"Lemme see, 'tis 'bout six months sence he run 'way, an' that 'ud be twenty-five dollars," the landlord responded.

"Here's yer moonny," said Dennis somewhat excitedly, "an' I'll garanty the rint fer ther nixt six months."

Before the expiration of the next rent term Dennis' faith in the prospect of Ike's return commenced to grow faint. The fact that Ike had not even written to anybody there caused Dennis to feel that he had met with some mishap and might never be heard of again. While his faith in Ike's honor and integrity was not shaken in the least, he concluded that if there was no real prospect of his immediate return it was a needless expense to maintain an office for him any longer, and removed his furniture, books and papers to his house, where he carefully stored them until such time as they might be called for by Ike or his heirs.

Mandy Garland went herself each day to receive the family mail. The young lady's eyes swelled with mortification and a sense of wounded pride as day after day passed and there was no letter addressed to her from Ike. The apology and profuse excuses which had been counted upon at first, came by and by to be regarded with contempt. The idea that she should some morning be surprised by a large square envelope, and be in no doubt for a single second as to from whom it came, faded away. "He will write some day or other," reiterated Mandy with unabated confidence for a time. "It is very bad conduct I allow; but I have confidence that he will surely write to me."

What Mandy thought of Ike's sudden departure nobody there was able to learn, although Ame Blibbers called at the Garland homestead and vainly tried to learn her feelings in the matter. The most encouragement Ame received was when she said, "Mr. Blibbers, I do hope and pray that some day we will learn that Lawyer Glidden is not the deceitful character that circumstances now make him appear."

"You heard, then, about his bein' married?" Ame said.

"Yes, I did hear some talk to that effect, Mr. Blibbers," she answered. "But the conversation was between Mr. Billings and Mr. Rankin, and I know they never had a kind word for Lawyer Glidden since he openly accused them of villainous traits."

The Widow Garland and her daughter left home a few months after Ike's disappearance. While they were making preparations for the trip Mandy said to her

mother, "There must be a reason. He has met with some fatality or he would write." While still a long way off she could mark, or fancied she could mark, the gathering doubt, the surprise which his appearance would create. It was the same, even after she went away ; for many days she expected a letter from him.

Years flew by and no explanation of Ike's departure or his whereabouts came back to Blueberry Falls, and with the increasing growth and population and every increasing industrial prominence of the blueberry towns, Ike's personality became a shadowy memory in the minds of most of the inhabitants.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KING OF THE BARRENS.

THE post-office at Squirmtown was kept in a grocery store, where one corner of the building was reserved for the boxes and pigeon-holes which constituted the postal department of that section.

The mail was due about eight o'clock in the evening, and a crowd usually gathered in front of the store to welcome the stage as it halted to deliver its precious freight.

On its arrival the driver pompously threw out the mail-bags, and then with a degree of loftiness imparted to the people the bits of news gathered along his route. The post-master with an air of importance carried the pouches containing the mail into the office, dumped the contents on the counter, sorted the papers and letters in the pigeon-holes, and announced in a loud voice, "The mail's open'd." The throng formed in line, and filed by slowly. Each one in his turn paused before the post-master, he knew them all, but they announced their names, and sometimes the names of neighbors who intrusted to them the duty of bringing their mail. On the occasion of opening the mail it was the custom and practice of almost every individual in the district to crowd into the store, and not to move until the ceremony of distributing the mail was over. The majority of those

in waiting had never received a letter and never expected to receive one, yet they each inquired for mail night after night in the same manner as those who were accustomed to receive letters.

They went there, chiefly from force of habit, to exchange the gossip of the village. They discussed the news of the day while waiting for the arrival of the stage, and when the postman in answer to their inquiry responded, "No mail ter-night," they wended their way homeward, apparently with the same satisfied demeanor as though they had been the recipients of innumerable letters and papers.

One evening while the crowd were congregated at the store, Sile Lombard, who was sitting on the counter, said, "So the Widder Garlan' an' her dar'ter is in Cal'forny. What in earth be they a-doin' away out there?"

"Dunno; but some one sed, you know, that their a-goin' ter git a fortune. It's been a sort o' traditshun for long time they wuz a-goin' ter git a legacy. 'Bout fifteen year ago there wuz letters and papers come sayin' what they'd git an old miner's money, what went 'round the Horn in '49 and died rich. That rumor died out, and every four or five year it is brought out fresh and new; I hain't heerd nothin' 'bout it for this five year, so I guess it's all died out. They prob'bly just went there ter git work, and now folks is a gabblin' agin about that fortune, just because they happened to gone ter Cal'forny," responded the old man Rankin.

"Oh, that's all nonsense; they hain't goin' ter git no fortune, no mor'n I be, and all my folks died poorer'n I be. Why, thought folks said 'cause they went away so kind o' quietly, and didn't say much 'bout it, that they

went out West where that air Glidden went to," said Sile.

"I know they said something of that kind, but then I don't b'lieve they ever heard from Glidden after he skipped out. 'Twarn't so; they never follered up that scapegoat of a Glidden. I think it was gettin' kind o' hard here fer the widder ter git a livin', and I guess they went away ter git employment. That's all; the fortune they've got is just the same as the rest of us, what has ter work for all we git," continued the old man Rankin.

"What's eggs wuth now, Steeve?" inquired Sile.

"Ten cents a dozen," answered the post-master and store-keeper.

"Prutty cheap, hain't they?" said Sile, "accordin' ter the way corn is a-sellin'. Phew! meal 'ill be a dollar a bushel 'fore winter. That puts me in mind of the year they tell 'bout Ame Blibber's wife. Yer know she's as close as the bark ter a tree, and once when meal wuz high, she wuz complainin' about how much't cost ter feed her hens, an' she wuzn't gettin' many eggs. Some one told her ter mix a little sawdust with ther meal and 'twould be just as well for the hens, bein' as meal wuz so high. Next mornin' she mixed a little sawdust with ther meal, an' the hens 'ppeared ter eat it just's well 's they did when it was all meal. So she thought it 'twas fustrate, an' the next day she put in a little more sawdust, and a little less meal, an' that seemed ter go all right. So she kept on, each day a-puttin' in a little more sawdust and a little less meal, and ther hens seem'd ter take ter it fust class. And bumby it got so's 'twuz all

sawdust and no meal. And she sot a dozen o' the eggs what her hens laid under a broody hen, and she hatched out 'leven woodpeckers and a chicken with a wooden leg."

"Haw! haw! haw!" roared the crowd when Sile had finished his parody on Mrs. Blibber's hens. About the time the laughter had subsided Jimmy Hope, who had just returned from Bar Harbor for a few days' vacation, came into the store. Everybody regarded him with a kind of surprised curiosity, from the fact that he had figured in so many sensational features in the history of the village, and everybody stepped aside to give him pathway through the throng. His return home was an event in the little community. When everybody had shaken hands with him, and he became relieved of answering further questions about his new vocation, he somewhat attracted the attention of all present by asking in his usual loud voice, "Where's Tim Cronin? haven't seen him around to-night?"

"Haw! haw! haw!" roared a half-dozen voices as an attempt was made to create a laugh at the mere mention of Tim's name. "Hain't you heerd 'bout Tim's dream?" said Sile Lombard in a half-sarcastic tone.

"No; why, what is there about his dream? I hain't heard anything about it. It seems as though there must be something funny, as you are all smiling; come tell me about it," said Jimmy.

"Oh, there's nothin' 'bout it; only Tim 'ud been on a spree, an' waked up kind o' deleris, an' imagined he wuz king o' the Blueberry Barrens. He claim'd the King o' England giv'd the whole territory ter some o'

his ancesstores in Ireland, and he jest found out 'bout it. An' he went 'round and forbid anybody ever pickin' berries on the Barrens, and wuz goin' ter sue everybody in the bitter bizness fer all the berries they'd used," said Sile.

"Well, what has he done about it?" anxiously inquired Jimmy.

"Oh, 'twas only a dream you know. An' when he come ter his senses, he wuz so 'shamed 'bout it he didn't come down town agin, and that wuz more'n six months ago," answered Sile.

"Oh, he's been down few times ter git terbacker an' papers, but he don't make no talk with no one. They say he stays ter home an' reads all ther time. Some o' ther boys wuz up ter see him t'other Sunday, and they said he wuz gettin' kinder light-headed, fer he'd talked tem'prance and all sich nonsense, an' he had some crazy noshuns about an envention he's bin a-readin' 'bout. Some kind o' machin'ry what they call 'lektricity," said old man Rankin.

"Don't you ever worry about Tim Cronin going crazy. Probably he has reformed. Lawyer Glidden used to say he was the brightest man in this section, and if he'd ever square away he'd be a smart man; guess I'll run up Sunday afternoon and see Tim," said Jimmy, as the mail carriage rumbled up in front of the store.

Tim's dream undoubtedly had been the occasion of some embarrassment, yet it was not the cause of his absence from the village.

His mother's health was poor, and she had urged him to **stay** at home and cultivate the farm, so that he **might**

be with her in those declining years, and he acquiesced to her wishes. He had remained at home, simply to devote himself to the industry and skill required to make the little farm a paying institution. But it was true, nevertheless, that he had abandoned the drink habit.

“I have the prettiest little farm in the country, and I wish that you would take a stroll with me out through the fields and see the great variety of vegetables I have planted and how well they are growing. I love nature, and it does me good to just walk through the vines and leaves and watch them grow,” said Tim to Jimmy Hope that Sunday when he visited him.

“What a surprise, Tim! I never thought that you would settle down to an industrious garden farmer. This field of vegetables is one of the most beautiful sights I ever saw,” remarked Jimmy.

“I expect to sell this crop for much more than I could have earned had I been at day’s labor, so on the whole I am getting very much interested in my new occupation,” said Tim.

“No doubt of that; you are evidently working on a more systematic plan than any of your neighbors, and there is no reason why you cannot make this a profitable enterprise. But then it doesn’t seem like you to be engaged in a quiet occupation like this. Don’t you ever get lonesome out here?” said Jimmy.

“Lonesome! why I don’t have time to even think of it. I spend the days in the field, and when night comes I’m so tired I’m glad to lay back and read,” responded Tim.

“Read! do you read much, Tim?” inquired Jimmy, in a tone of surprise, because he never imagined Tim in connection with books.

"Read! why, I have read almost every book on electricity I've ever heard of. I have a friend in Boston that has very kindly loaned me nearly every book in his library. I'm very much interested in the study of electricity. Almost every week I receive a bundle of books from him by express," answered Tim.

"So you confine your reading to this one subject, do you?" asked Jimmy.

"Oh, ho, no. But I got interested in that subject, and naturally enough followed it along. Then I took up the Spanish language, and I think I have mastered it sufficiently to converse with anybody in Spanish," said Tim.

"This is wonderful; you don't know how pleased I am to know that you are getting on so nicely," said Jimmy in a complimentary tone.

"Yes, people wonder that I don't go to town oftener than I do, but you see I do not have the time to spare. I receive a number of the leading magazines regularly, and my friend sends me nearly all the popular books soon as published, so I spend the time very pleasantly without going to town for amusement," said Tim.

"But don't you ever get tired of this life out here, and have a desire to go to town?" asked Jimmy.

"Tired out here! why, no indeed. I'm too busy reading and studying to even think of being tired of it. Really, I haven't been in town, except when on some special errand, since last fall. But since my mother has become so feeble we have decided to sell the farm, and move into the village, where she will be near a doctor. She is sick a great deal, and I know she could have better care if we were in town," said Tim.

It was really true that Tim scarcely ever went to town unless to attend to some matter that required his presence there. He became fond of reading as he stated, and had acquired a fund of general knowledge unequalled by even the leading men in the country. When he did visit the village his conduct was so gentlemanly and courteous that his old acquaintances began to respect him as the soul of morality and the honor of good citizenship. Ansel Hicks became a great admirer of the young man's noble traits and excellent behavior, and offered him a situation in his store at a small salary, which he at first declined. But the following spring his mother's health became so poor that he did sell the farm, and he and his mother moved to the village, where the enfeebled old lady might have such medical attendance as her sickly condition required, and then he entered upon the duties of clerk in the store of Mr. Hicks. Tim and his mother were made very welcome in the village, and especially Tim's old friends were pleased to have him with them again. But he had changed. How creditably!

Tim took great pains to embellish the appearance of the somewhat neglected old stock of goods, and even the loafers seemed to point with pride to the changed appearance of the store. The genial manner of the new clerk won new patrons, and it was evident that Ansel's place of business was commencing to become the most popular resort of the people from the rural districts who came to town to barter eggs and butter and produce for groceries and the late patterns of prints and gingham. Indeed, so busy were Ansel and Tim kept through

the day that the duties of posting and adjusting accounts became a task that required the services of the new clerk every evening and frequently all day on Sundays and holidays. It was easily seen that Tim was the life of the business, and that the proprietor was dependent upon his tact and good judgment in even the small details pertaining to the management of the store.

Two years had scarcely passed since Tim in a delirium had declared himself "King of the Barrens," until the public commenced to realize that there was a clean and active influence for good exerted by the man who a short while ago had been looked upon with pity and reproach.

The idler, the wayward, useless young man — possessed by a pure, noble, spirit-stirring emotion — had lifted himself out of himself, superior to sordid ambition, and aroused himself out of slothful inactivity. He labored, studied and became enterprising, and went about his daily rounds with zest, earnestness and pride. His opinion in any public matter was valued; his neighbors looked upon him as a man of sound judgment and excellent ideas; and even other business men, beside his employer, frequently sought his advice. In fact, all those who were bewildered by reason of an entanglement of their affairs, were beginning to submit their sorrows and griefs to Tim, in hope that a suggestion from him might relieve their predicament; and it was evident that he was filling a place in that section that apparently had been vacant since the departure of Ike Glidden.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS.

A SERIES of evangelistic meetings were in full blast at Squirmtown, a general revival of religious interest was sweeping through the village, and the atmosphere seemed to be redolent of Christian piety. Even the street loafers stood on the corner and hummed the air of sacred hymns with as much fervor and feeling as could be manifested by the most devout church member. It was generally understood that on Sunday evening the Rev. Mr. Squeeks, a very able minister, was to fill the pulpit of the little church where the people of the district usually gathered to worship. The cold frosty air of that Sunday in February reminded the janitor to take special pains to warm the building properly, and have it comfortable for the evening service, and he certainly gave the matter faithful attention. When services opened the atmosphere of the church was at just about suitable temperature for the comfort of those who had driven a distance in the chilly climate. The stove was of the large old-fashioned barrel shape, into which sticks of wood were thrown through the top and stood on ends, and there was always a generous supply of the most choice hard wood piled back of it. The janitor, Mr. Rankin (Bluster Rankin's father), was an old man, lame with rheumatism, walked bent over a cane, and was so

deaf that he always occupied a front seat directly opposite to the pulpit, so that he could distinctly hear the minister's sermon.

The minister was certainly and truly an eloquent speaker; he captivated the attention of his audience from the beginning to the close of his sermon, and at times became exceedingly forcible in his manner of expression.

He scored the people for their lack of interest in the church and in religion, and advised them to be more devoted to the Lord and his works; he told them that they must be more affectionate with the Lord, and that they should have more fire in their hearts for the Lord, and that devotion to him would then be certain. In trying to impress on his audience the importance of this, he became forcible as well as eloquent, and at the highest pitch of his voice said, "We must have *more fire* in our hearts." The first part of the minister's remark was much louder than the last, and the janitor, being very deaf, heard only the words, "We must have more fire," and taking it for granted that it was a command from the minister to attend to the fire, arose on his cane, hobbled down the aisle, put another piece of wood into the stove, opened the drafts, and returned to his pew.

About five minutes later the minister got around again to a similar part of the sermon, and said in a still louder tone of voice, "We must have more fire," and the janitor hobbled down to the back of the church, tried to put another piece of wood into the stove, got it caught in the top of the stove and made a terrible racket in trying to get it free from the entanglement and with-

draw it from the stove. After busying himself a few minutes with the damper and drafts he returned to his seat, exhibiting a degree of ill-humor by the manner in which he allowed his cane to touch the floor. In less than ten minutes after the janitor reached his seat the second time, and got through puffing and breathing by reason of the extra and faithful effort (as he supposed) he had just made to obey an earnest request, the minister got up in the air as high as his voice could reach, and came down in a dramatic and effective manner, saying, "We must have more fire," at the same time swinging his arms and slapping his hands together to give his remarks especial emphasis.

The janitor arose again and started for the back of the church, and in passing down the aisle the sound of his cane on the floor was *thump, thump, thump*, indicating the rage and anger that filled his breast as he imagined he had already replenished the stove with fuel sufficient to cause the heat to be diffused through every part of the building. When he reached the stove he was so irate that he lifted off the cover, and with a long iron bar began poking and working the sticks in it from side to side to make room for another stick, and, in fact, was so infuriated that he could not realize that he was making a noise and disturbing the speaker in his effort to cause "more fire."

The minister noticed the janitor was giving more attention to the stove than usual, but did not think that the frequent trips down the aisle to nourish and augment the fire were by reason of any of his remarks, until he came to the same oratorical flight of "we must have

more fire," while the janitor was in the act of wrestling the long iron poker with the sticks of wood wedged into the stove and making a riotous noise. Then the whole matter dawned upon the minister, who came to a halt in the sermon, and when all was quiet except the clamor and rattle at the stove, said, "Mr. Rankin, please, I do not mean that kind of fire; I mean that we must have more fire in our hearts for God."

The janitor returned again to his seat, feeling embarrassed as well as provoked, and the minister proceeded with the sermon. At that juncture the church had become suffocating, and Becca Blunt fainted away by reason of the excessive fire and stifling heat, and her father, Squire Blunt, and Ansel Hicks carried her out in the open air, and some of the ladies threw a dipper of cold water in her face to resuscitate her. Finally it was found that a tight collar was pressing on the jugular vein, and when that was loosened she revived.

The next morning at Sid Horner's blacksmith shop there seemed to be more than the usual rush of business. Cy Haines was there for the purpose of getting a logging-sled repaired; Dick Drake was there with his steers to have them shod for the first time; and five or six others were there with horses to have either new shoes put on or to have the calks on the old ones sharpened. While the blacksmith and helper were busy at the forge and anvil making and fitting work for their uncommonly large custom, the patrons each took their turn in the order in which they arrived at the shop, and sat around the fire while waiting for an opportunity to be served.

"That was a good sermon last night," exclaimed Cy Haines earnestly.

“And right to the point too,” responded Sid.

“Well, ’twas a pretty hot one,” remarked Dick Drake, “an’ it seemed the hotter the preacher got, the more old man Rankin tried ter make it.”

“That’s ’bout so,” agreed Cy, “the more blaze the minister tried ter git inter ther heart, the more wood the old man put on ter ther fire.”

“Think it’s jest about time somebody else took charge o’ the meetin’ house and built ther fires; ther old man’s all right, but he’s gone by; needs some young man ter ’tend out,” remarked Sid.

“Why, he kept up a reg’lar an’ a stiddy disturbance all through the sermon, an’ I for one think it’s ’bout time we got a new janitor,” said Dick.

“He’s so deaf he can’t hear nothin’,” remarked another, who was nibbling at the stem of a corn-cob pipe.

“Yes, and he’s so thund’rin’ lame that he makes an awful racket ev’ry time he goes acrosst the church, so that yer can’t ha’f hear what ther minister sez,” joined in Cy.

“When he riz up ther third time last night ter go and poke wood inter that red-hot stove my wife was so mollified that she sed she never got no pleasure out of hearin’ the sermon,” said Sid, confirming all that had been said about the aged and infirm janitor.

The ball was then and there started rolling, and that evening Mr. Rankin, who had been janitor for nearly forty years or ever since the church was built, received an order of discharge; it being done in such a hurry, and on the impulse of some of the over-zealous new

members, the usual vote of thanks for "long, faithful and efficient service" was unintentionally omitted, and a new janitor was authorized to take the keys, blow out the lights, and lock up the church when service was over.

The overthrow and order of dismissal in such an ungrateful and uncereemonious manner was too much for the old man; he took it to heart, and during the next few days he appeared to be plunged into the deepest and blackest melancholy. While the Rankins were debating on the atrocious act that had been perpetrated on them Bluster remarked, "Dad, don't you never mind; we'll get up a meetin' down in the school house, and run an opposishun ter Mr. Squeeks. I know where there's a preacher what'll come up here and hold meetin's as long as we want him to, an' Cy Haines and Sid Horner can hav' tha whole revival all ter themselves."

"I don't think much of the doctrine Mr. Squeeks is a-preachin' anyway," said the old gentleman, cheering up.

"Doctrine! why it's the same old kind what they've been a-preachin' up round here ever since I kin remember," buoyantly said Bluster.

"I would like to hear a real good sermon for once," piously said Bluster's mother.

"Well, sir, there's a set o' preachers from Shilo what's been holdin' meetin's down ter Snare Creek, and they say that they're a-preachin' a bran' new religgin, an' I b'lieve we could get one on 'em ter come up here," said Bluster determinedly.

"What a nice thing it would be to have a real Christian man ter come and preach fer us, who b'lieve in ther Lord!" said the good lady.

"I'm a-goin' out ter-morrer with a paper, and see how many I kin git ter sign, and if I kin git a dozen or so ter put down ther names, I'll harness up the kicker and drive down and git one on 'em ter come up," declared Bluster.

Sure enough, the next morning Bluster did commence a canvass and aroused a great excitement in the district, secured the promise of many of the old members as well as all the relatives of the Rankins to withdraw from the church society; and created a hatred toward the active new members, for usurping power and control over the church property, that developed into intense resentment. He seemed to be very successful in his new enterprise, and received encouragement from almost everybody to whom he broached the subject.

When he met Tim Cronin, and informed him of what was going on and of his intention to go and hunt up a preacher, Tim said, "You will undoubtedly interfere with the revival that is now going on, and I'm afraid that you will be the means of bringing it to an early close."

"We'll take tha 'hull side right out of tha church society, if I get ter work in this religgin bizness in rale earnest," boastingly said Bluster.

"Really, going down Jonesport way after a preacher, be yer?" asked Tim.

"Yes, that's the cal'lashun," answered Bluster.

"Bluster, you're a mighty slick-lookin' feller, and a pretty smooth talker, and I b'lieve if you'd quit swear-in', and deal in a better class of horses, you'd make a good preacher yourself," said Tim, in the way of a joke.

"Me, if I only had a little practice I could spout with the best of 'em," said Bluster with an air of conceit.

"You, you're all right, Bluster, if you'd only a mind to think so; why, I'd risk you at a camp-meetin'," continued Tim, while a twinkle in his eye forced a smile he was unable to suppress.

A succession of meetings was accordingly opened at the school-house; Bluster professed Christianity, and the news spread far and wide through the outskirts of the district that "Bluster Rankin's 'sperienced religgin," and large numbers attended the meetings, partly with a curiosity to learn if the report was true, and when they learned of its accuracy, continued to attend to hear him night after night give testimony in his characteristic manner of his change of heart.

About twelve on the night after Bluster had experienced religion, there came a loud rap at his door. He was somewhat startled, but went however to the door, calling out as he did so, "Who's thar?"

"It's me, Dinnis Bogan."

"Well, Dennis, what can I do for you?"

"And it's askin' what ye can do fer *me*, is it ye are? Faith, I jist heerd ye'd 'sperienced religgin, and that ye'd said in the meetin' that ye'd make amends for all the wrongs ye'd iver done any one, and if ye'd owed any one ye'd make it roight with them as much as ye was able. Is that thrue, Bluster?"

"Even if it is, Mr. Bogan, why did you rouse me at this late hour?" said Bluster, not a little annoyed.

"Begorre, I came now so as to be ahead of the rush. I

know there'll be a crowd here in the mornin', soon as the people hears about it."

"How have I wronged you, Mr. Bogan?"

"Ah, now don't ye be askin' sich o' me. Didn't ye fool me out o' forty dollars that I lint ye?"

"Yes, I do owe you forty dollars, Dennis," said Bluster.

"Well, what are ye goin' to do about it? I s'pose ye'd ruther keep on owin' it to me than to chate me out of it?"

"Now, Dennis, please don't torture me any more about that debt I owe you and don't say anything to our neighbors. You go home, and depend upon it I'll go to-morrow morning and try to borrow the money to pay you. If I can't pay you I'll give you a bill of sale of my only horse to square the debt."

As Dennis wended his way homeward he smiled to himself at the way Bluster had promised to pay that long-standing debt that he had so often refused to settle.

Whether or not Tim's jest or suggestion had anything to do with Bluster's Christian course may be doubtful; but Tim always claimed that his few words of encouragement was the turning-point in his career.

Bluster, as he had always been known by everybody in the district, was bright and intuitive, and soon acquired sufficient knowledge to make a very respectable appearance in public, and in time he devoted his entire energy to conducting meetings in the surrounding towns. He seemed to have a natural aptitude for that line of work, made a good impression wherever he spoke, and

became popular as a speaker. Mingling with cultivated people apparently had a refining influence upon him; his dialect improved, he acquired courtly manners, and in time became a great lecturer and a high-class evangelist.

The last report of him was contained in an item of a daily paper published in one of the Western cities where he was conducting meetings, in which they referred to him as the "Rev. Samuel B. Rankin," and paid a high tribute to his ability.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN.

WHILE it might not have been because that party were sagacious in promoting a policy for its success there, it was nevertheless true that the district in which Blueberry Falls and Squirmtown are located had been Democratic for many years. The problematic result of the vote had been so decidedly in favor of that party that nobody looked forward to a time when a condition could change the effect of an election.

The result of each election had been a sweeping victory for the Democratic party, so that the few adherents, throughout the district, of the principles of the other parties, had lost all interest in the formula for nominating a candidate. The custom in vogue had been for the towns to alternate, one following the other in succession, in selecting a candidate for Representative to Legislature. This year it was the privilege of the Republican Committee of Blueberry Falls to name the candidate of their respective party for legislative honors. There were several towns in the district, so that it was several years since such a responsibility rested with them, and through want of practice it was a question if their method of procedure would prove legal. However, an assemblage of seven members of the Republican party gathered one evening at the store of Ansel Hicks.

Ansel stood on a shoe box and called the caucus to order, read the call, and announced, "Gen'lemen, a grate duty has come ter us ter perform, and I tell yer we can't be too keerful in what we do here at this meetin'. Don't you think, Sile, that we'd better send out an' try an' git a few more voters ter come in?"

Taking off his hat, and rising with great pomp and dignity, Sile said, "Yer honor, — no, ixcuse me, — Mr. Mod'rator, I'd do anything under the sun fer my party, an' ter make this one o' the gratest po-lit-li-cal dem-n-os-tra-shuns in the hist'ry o' this grate and glorious gov'ment o' tha' United States, but I tell yer I can't do no more fer ther cause o' liberty than what has already bin done. Hain't I bin a-runnin' my legs right square off this four days a-gettin' this crowd together, an' hain't I got ev'ry Rapublikin voter in tha hull taown tergether but Tim, an' his mother's sick." And as Sile was about to sit down he broke out anew, "I wish ter thank yer, Mr. Chairman, fer this grate oppurtunity I've had ov a-expressin' my views on ther grate party I am so proud of bein' a member." As Sile sat down they all applauded his "speech" by clapping hands.

"Sile," said Ansel, "what d'you think? Don't you b'lieve it 'ud look a little better if you'd go out an' call in a few of ther boys, just ter swell ther crowd; yer know when tha report goes out it 'ud be grate, yer know, ter say we had a large crowd."

"B'lieve it would," replied Sile, as he unlocked the store door and started out after some of the younger generation to come and witness the ceremony of nominating a candidate. In a short time he returned with a

rabble of a dozen ragged and disorderly boys, who were evidently wondering why their presence was so much appreciated.

"That's it, boys," said Ansel, "come in, be seated, take off yer hats, an' be good boys, an' yer'll see some o' tha machin'ry o' this grate gov'ment."

Ansel had not always been in popular favor with the boys, and in fact they were not with him; for on many occasions, when they had tortured his store door during an evening with a kick or a barricade, he had called each of them some pretty harsh names and threatened them with the disgrace of legal proceedings. The boys took seats as requested, but before many minutes elapsed they were scattered to each part of the store.

About the time it had been moved and seconded that Squire Blunt should act as chairman of the meeting, and the squire had taken his stand on the shoe box, Ansel's mind was somewhat relieved of the great responsibility that had been bearing so heavily upon him and he took an opportunity to look around the store.

"What in thunder be you a-doin'?" he cried out. "Hain't you boys a-sittin' where I told you to. Jimmie Billins, you git out o' them raisins. Dannie Morley, take them things out o' yer pocket. Sile, 'rrest 'em!"

The caucus was then in tremendous uproar, as the command for the constable to arrest them caused some to make a bold dash for liberty by racing through the store, while others endeavoring to get out found the door locked. Sile took the things out of Dannie Morley's pocket, drove Jimmie Billins from the raisins, and restored order by requesting the boys to take seats again and to remain quiet.

Then Ansel arose and attempted to read from a newspaper some resolution that had been adopted at the State Convention just held. When he had read about ten minutes he paused to get breath, and happened to think of the raisins and the boys. He took a sly glance around the store, and as he yelled, "Yer'll lug off ther hull store if I don't put yer out," the meeting was in a state of consternation, with the boys racing around the store endeavoring to dodge Sile. Finally it was agreed that the only safe way to proceed was to put the boys out, and as Sile searched each one of the mischievous urchins, Ansel opened the door and allowed him to go. When the under-voting element had been dismissed and the air had calmed down, Ansel proceeded to finish the reading of the resolution. As he sat down Ame Blibbers said, "That's a mighty good speech; wonder who wrote it? Bet Littlefield had something to do with it."

"No, I think t' must er' been Bryan," said Sile.

"Bryan! what be you a-thinkin' 'bout? Hain't Bryan a Democrat?" responded Ame.

"No, that's 'bout all you know, Ame," replied Sile, as he bit off a fresh chew of tobacco.

"Well, if yer won't take my word fer it, ask Tim," continued Ame.

"Thare! thare! can't have no more o' that; we've got important business here ter transact, an' we musn't neglect it and take up other matters fust," commanded Squire Blunt, as he pounded on the counter for order.

"Who'll be ther candy-date? name yer man: that's ther next thing what's afore this house," continued the squire.

"I nom'nate Squire Blunt," said Ansel.

"I won't take it under no consid'ration; my hay's short, an' I've got ter stay home an' try ter feed more fodder an' medder hay ter my stock than last winter, so I can't think of a-goin', on no 'ccount," cried out the squire, for fear the honor was to be forced upon him. "Anse, you take it, yerself."

"No, no, I can't," responded Ansel; "I'm sick with ther yaller ja'ndies more'n ha'f ther time, an' it 'ud be a dredful thing if I wuz takin' with a fit o' my dizzy headaches while makin' a speech up thar. Somebody else 'ill have ter be ther candy-date."

"I'll take ther grate responsibil'ty o' servin' ther party, and be ther candy-date myself, bein's nobudy else is a-willin' ter serve ther country," volunteered Sile.

"Haw! haw! haw! an' you'd be a nice one ter tell ther Republikens up in t'other part o' ther deestrick that we'd put up," said Ame. "Yer hain't been in ther party long 'nough, Sile. Why, yer never was a Republiken until t'other night when we took yer in, when we sot over there in ther old mill and made ther plans uv this meetin', and you agreed ter help get ther crowd out ter ther caucus. Yer hain't got no right ter be a candy-date, I tell yer, until after you've voted one straight Republiken vote at an election. I think I'm the most loikly man here fer that high position, and I now, in the presence o' my feller citizens, 'nnounce myself as a candy-date for that office."

When Ame finished his remarks and became seated, the chairman said, "Well, it looks now as we wuz

a-gettin' well underway. A while ago we didn't have no eandy-date, and now we've got two. Gen'lemen, Sile Lombard and Ame Blibbers is both in ther field, and it 'ill be fer you, and not fer me, ter decide. So all in favor o' Ame take seats on ther right-hand side o' the stove, and all those ter vote fer Sile 'ill go on t'other side o' ther stove, and those con'try minded — no, well, never mind, I made a mistake 'cause ther hain't no con'try minded ter this.

The voting elements each took quarters favorable to their choice of candidates, and then the chairman proceeded to count and declare the vote.

"I've qu-ounted ther vote, an' I find what Sile has three and Ame three, so there's no choice. So nuther one o' yer's nom'ated. What'll we do in that case?" said the chairman.

"Who'd you vote for, squire? If you'll vote fer me I'll have a majority, an' if yer will I'll saw an' split all yer wood fer nothin' afore 'lection," said Ame.

"No, I can't vote. Why, I'm chairman o' ther meetin'," responded the squire.

"What'll we do about this plaguey thing anyway; wish't I'd been a Demmycrat, an' I'd not got inter this mess," said Ansel. "If we can't nom'nate a man an' ther bizness don't go through all right, the people in t'other part o' ther deestric't 'ill blame me fer the hull o' it."

"Ansel, I think we'd better send fer Tim ter come and try an' help us get this thing fixed up some way," suggested the squire.

"That's so, an' it's gettin' late; long past my bed-

time already. Sile, you go tell Tim I want him on important business," said Ansel.

Sile, in response to the command from Ansel, went after Tim, and soon returned with information that Tim would come directly.

In the course of ten minutes or so Tim responded to the summons of his employer, to learn the nature of the important business, and to his surprise learned that his services were required to decide how a candidate might be chosen when there were two candidates and a tie-vote. When Tim had listened to the details of the procedure, and had learned who the candidates were, he burst into a fit of laughter, and said, "So, it's a deadlock between Ame and Sile for the honor, is it?"

Calling Ansel to one side Tim whispered to him that it would never do to nominate either of those men, and suggested that it should be some representative man and a man in good standing in his town.

"Don't see but what you'll have ter take it, Tim, for I know 't if you'll stand both Ame and Sile 'ill haul out," said Ansel, as he proceeded to confer with the candidates about the matter of a compromise before he gave Tim a chance to decline the honor of a unanimous nomination.

"Yes, yes, we'll all pull out fer Tim," responded Ame and Sile in chorus.

"Yes, that 'ud be the right man in the right place," cried out Squire Blunt, who at this period seemed to have more respect for Tim than in the days when he chastised his daughter for even recognizing him when passing on the street.

"I shall be a candidate under no consideration," said Tim; "that is settled, so do not reckon on me. I think that the proper thing to do here is to nominate either Squire Blunt or Mr. Hicks, as they are both identified with the business interests of the town and are more or less known throughout the district."

"I can't be no candy-date, Mr. Cronin," said the squire. "But I thank yer fer ther honor, just the same."

"Well, Mr. Hicks, it falls to you and you must accept. Here let's close this thing up by filling in the nomination blanks, and go home," said Tim.

"No, no, how can I go away, Tim? You know I'm sick more'n ha'f ther time, an' can't leave home," cried out Ansel in a state of bewilderment.

"Well, Mr. Hicks, you need not be afraid that you will have to be away from home any, to attend to the duties of Representative. This is a strong Democratic district, and the work of nominating a Republican candidate is only a matter of form. If you have the courage to face defeat by the large majority that the Democrats have in this district, it is all that's required. I'm going to write your name in this blank space of the nomination papers as the candidate chosen at this caucus," said Tim.

"Courage! I've 'nough courage to sacrifice my life fer ther sake o' my party," proudly returned Ansel.

"That's ther kind o' a man ter have," said Sile in approval of the courage of Ansel.

"There now, I think it's settled. Squire Blunt, you should declare in open meeting that Mr. Hicks is the candidate, and I'll proceed to fill in the papers."

"I declare that Mr. Hicks is 'lected ter ther Legislature," announced the squire.

"No, no," said Tim in disgust;" "not elected; he is simply nominated as a candidate; but then there, never mind, any more of it. I suppose any old form is good enough. Here, Mr. Hicks, sign these papers of acceptance of the nomination, and let us all go home."

As they blew out the lights and were filing through the door on their way homeward, Ame said, "Tim, this was one o' ther greatest p'litical meetin's ever held in this taown, I b'lieve."

"Glad to hear it," responded Tim with a smile.

"Good night," said each one of them on the steps and they separated for their respective places of abode.

There seemed to be little or no interest manifested in the campaign throughout the district by either party, and in fact few of the people ever took any interest in political matters, and but few seemed to even know that Ansel was a candidate for office. One evening the usual crowd of loafers were gathered at Ansel's store, and one of them said, "They've just had a flag-raisin' over ter Jonesb'ry, an' I'd like ter gone over had I a-knowed it in time."

"So 'ud I, for I never wuz to one. I've been ter barn raisin's and sich times as that, but I've never been ter a flag-raisin'," responded another.

Tim then suggested that, as Squirmtown never did have an out-and-out flag-raising, it would be the proper thing, to get up such a celebration some evening, and that it might tend to win to the Republican party the vote of the berry-picking contingency.

"By crackie, that's the scheme, an' we'll have a red hot 'un," said one of the loafers, as they were all making ejaculations in approval of the suggestion.

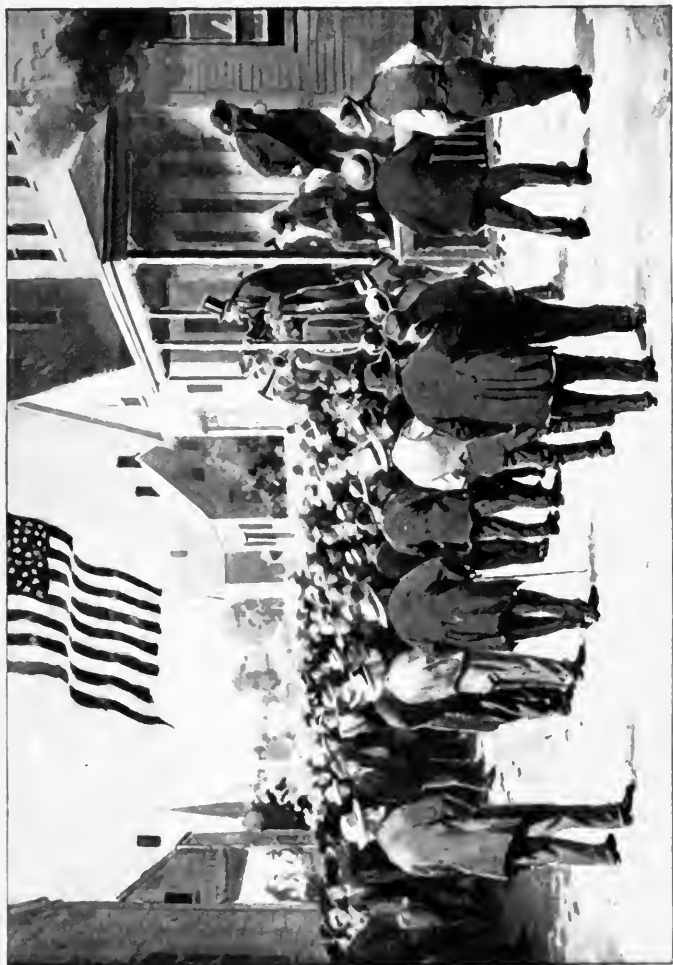
A flag was purchased, a brass band hired, and every detail of an extensive arrangement made for a red-letter event in the political history of that village.

The flag was to be hung on a line stretched from a pole on Sampson's tavern to a pole on Deacon Squirm's barn, which is directly across the street, and Ansel Hicks was to make some remarks from the steps of the tavern as the flag was being raised.

The evening of the flag-raising the band and a large delegation of ladies occupied the veranda, and a crowd was gathered around the house and stable yard, and those who had any desire for drinks were surging in and out of a little room adjoining the office, where a supply of torch-light-procession whiskey for the occasion was kept and being dealt out freely.

The programme as arranged by the committee on arrangements was as follows: Raising the flag, three cheers for McKinley and Hobart, three cheers for Ansel Hicks, Star-Spangled Banner by the band, speech by Ansel Hicks, music by the band.

The flag was very nicely hoisted, and it spread out in the breeze as beautifully as a true patriot could wish to see it. Then Tim, pushing Joe into the street, suggested that it was the proper time for the three cheers. Joe ran out under the flag, and proudly taking off his cap waved it in the air and sung out, "three cheers fer — fer — fer — three cheers —." The boys saw that he was bewildered and had forgotten the names of the Re-



SOMEONE INTERRUPTED BY YELLING, "FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!"

publican candidates, and somebody volunteered, as Joe supposed, to help him out of his dilemma by saying, just loud enough for Joe to hear him, "For Bryan and Hicks," and then Joe, with renewed vigor and at the top of his voice, yelled out, "three cheers for Bryan and Hicks, hip! hip! hooray!" The crowd, with the exception of Ansel, were so amused at Joe's great blunder that they all cheered and laughed to help poor Joe out of his difficulty, until the band struck up the Star-Spangled Banner. When the band finished the soul-stirring patriotic air, Ansel stepped forward to deliver a speech.

Ansel commenced by apologizing for Joe's great blunder in offering three cheers for Bryan, who was opposed to a tariff on blueberries, and was just getting to a point where he was paying himself a compliment, when some one interrupted him by yelling, "Fire! fire! fire!" The speaker stopped, and the crowd looked around, and sure enough there was to be seen smoke coming through every open window in the hotel from cellar to garret, and a rush was made into the house, and furniture and bedding began to come out of the second and third story windows, the same as waste stuff thrown from a kindling-wood factory.

By the time they got everything removed from the second and third stories of the tavern and had carried out the burning-hot, big kitchen range, an attempt was made to take the organ apart in order to get it out through the door, when suddenly some one discovered that the house was not on fire and that the smoke came from a disconnected stovepipe in the office. It seems that the

stove placed near the wall was full of paper, that had been accumulating there since the removal of the pipe in the spring, and on that evening some one, unintentional of harm, had thrown a lighted cigar-stub into it, which ignited the paper and caused the commotion.

When the real cause of the alarm became known the excitement subsided, and the more thoughtful Republicans tried to get the crowd together and have Ansel finish his speech. They looked around and were unable to find him. They asked Tim what had become of the speaker, and he began a search which extended everywhere, even to the stable, when the hostler informed him that Ansel had been there and got his horse and started for the Falls.

The fun and excitement of the flag-raising furnished merriment for everybody that attended, for the remainder of the season; but Tim was so thoroughly disgusted with Ansel's deserting them that evening that he made no further effort in his behalf. However, the Saturday evening before the election day, a powerful, stirring speaker lectured at Squirmtown in the interests of the Republican party, and discussed in an eloquent and forcible manner the dangers of a Democratic administration tinkering with the tariff on lumber, which would mean death to the principal industry of Maine, and promised that the Republican party would put a higher duty on blueberries.

The day of election dawned, almost without any interest in the people of either Blueberry Falls or at Squirmtown, but later in the day an occasional group might be found discussing the question of tariff on lumber and

blueberries ; but no one seemed interested in the candidacy for office of Mr. Hicks ; in fact, they scarcely gave him a thought in connection with the election.

The polls finally closed. To the amazement of everybody the Republican party was victorious, as it carried the blueberry district by an overwhelming majority, the first victory there in forty years ; and of ccourse Ansel Hicks was elected Representative to the Legislature.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ANTI-BITTER LAW.

THE victory of the Republican party in the blueberry district was a surprise to everybody. But when it had been considered that the growth of Squiretown brought many Republican voters into the district since the previous election, and that some of those interested in the blueberry industry changed their politics on account of the favorable prospect of a higher tariff being placed on blueberries, it could be easily seen that the Republicans might have claimed a walk-over from the start, had there been anybody there sufficiently interested to make a canvass of the situation. Notwithstanding that Republican shouters were hysterically shrieking their joy over the triumph of the party, only a few of Ansel's most intimate friends thought of him in connection with the victory. While his neighbors were slow to congratulate him on his success in being elected to an important office, letters began to pour in from people he never had heard of, extending the most cordial congratulations upon his great victory. It is surprising when a man has been elected to the legislature how quickly every one who has any political aspirations or pet hobby learns his address and solicits his influence. Ansel soon began to receive letters from high officials, addressed to him as "Honorable Ansel

Hicks," asking for support in political matters, and it was enough to make him feel that he was really sliding on a rainbow to some exalted station in life. He almost lost his head with so much notice and attention from those people who had sent him the courteous letters, and he began to really believe that his personality caused the great change in the result of the vote in the district.

As he had generally been looked upon as the most pronounced temperance fanatic in his town, those in charge of proposed legislation in the cause of temperance, naturally solicited his aid in their work, and sent a man for the express purpose of holding a conference with him.

The Republicans of Squirmtown were so elated over the result of the election that plans were made to celebrate the great victory of the Republican party in the district. An elaborate programme was arranged and carried out (as it happened) on the evening after the temperance man had called on Ansel.

Almost every dwelling was illuminated from cellar to garret, a merry crowd of people reveled around a large bonfire in front of the tavern, a brass band played popular airs, a bountiful supper was provided by the ladies at the vestry, and a public dance was held in the hall. After supper had been served, Ansel, really believing that it was his personality that had won the victory and that he was the incentive of all this hilarity, followed the crowd to the hall. When he entered some of the boys yelled out, "Speech, speech, Mr. Hicks! Mr. Hicks!" Without further invitation Ansel walked

up onto the stage for the purpose of responding to the wishes of an audience that seemed so anxious to be favored with an exhortation from him. He did make a speech. Such a harangue on absurd temperance notions was never before uttered in public. Whatever had been said to him by the temperance man, evidently worked him up to a pitch where he was in a craze on the subject of temperance. No people ever received such a shock as those engaged in the blueberry-bitter industry. He attacked them in the most abusive manner, and condemned the business as a menace to public welfare. And said it was "likker-sellin' o' ther wust kind," and emphatically declared that he was going to have a law enacted "that 'ud stop ther sale o' sich vile pizen." Everybody in the audience in any way connected with the bitter industry left the hall in disgust, wondering why they had ever allowed such a man to be elected to a public office.

The next morning "funeral services" were held at the office of Deacon Squirm's bottling establishment, where the principal people engaged in the bitter industry congregated to condole with each other on the death sentence to their business pronounced by Ansel at the public meeting the night previous. Ben Duncan was the last of the fraternity to call, and when he came in said, "Deacon, how'd you like the way 'lection turned; s'pose yer proud of yer brother-in-law?"

"Ansel Hicks is no brother-in-law to me. When my sister died I don't consider he was no more relation to me," answered Deacon Squirm.

"Well, I know yer can't have much love for that



"DAN GILES, I BELIEVE IF THER DEVIL WUZ ON THE REPUBLICAN TICKET, YOU'D VOTE
FER HIM!"

thunderin' old meddler, to say nothin' about claimin' relationship ter sich a thunderin' idiot," said Ben.

"You know there's no need ter ask me what I think o' how 'lection went," growled out the old man Spencer, who claimed to be the only one of the mourners that had not voted for Ansel; "I'm a dem'crat, was born a dem'crat, always been a dem'crat. I told them when they wanted me ter change over on 'ccount o' ther tariff, that there's no whiffin' round with me, fer I never split my ticket nor change it fer nobody, and that I wuz a-goin' ter vote ther straight dem'crat ticket, so yer see I didn't git in ter no scrape an' vote fer Ansel. Some on yer now say't yer didn't know 't Anse's name wuz on thet ticket or yer wouldn'ter voted on ther Republican side. But then, now that's past, I don't b'lieve in sellin' likker no more 'n ther rest o' yer, and when I put up a bottle o' Spencer's IXL bitters, I don't ask no man ter drink it unless he's ailin' with some of the diseases what's printed on ther label. My bitters ain't no more 'toxicatin' than any o' ther rest o' these great rem'dies advertised in ther city papers. But then, Dan Giles, I b'lieve if ther devil wuz on the Republican ticket you'd vote fer him."

"I'm a Republican," answered Dan, "but who'd ever a thought of Ansel Hicks a-bein' 'lected? I vote fer principle, and not fer men, because I b'lieve in ther principle of my party."

"Don't matter 'bout politics nor principles of any party, I don't b'lieve in likker-sellin', no more'n I do 'bout breaking ther Ten Commandments; an' furthermore, don't think this 'air business of puttin' up blueberry bitters has nothin' ter do with temperance busi-

ness; bless yer life, I can git a testimonial free from any preacher that has held service in our church this two year, that they've been cured of somethin' or t'other with my bitters" exasperatedly remarked the deacon, as he slapped his hand on his knee.

One of the Hunt brothers, who was the youngest and most business-like member of the party, quietly said that they should make an effort to get the most influential people in the vicinity to talk with Ansel, and perhaps they might prevail on him to not ask for any legislation that would tend to paralyze the chief industry of the district, and suggested that Tim Cronin seemed to have considerable influence with Ansel, and that he believed Tim would be the proper person to talk first with the member-elect.

"If Lawyer Glidden was only here I know he'd be just the one ter handle Anse," remarked Deacon Squirm.

"Well, he hain't here, so't we'll have ter do ther next best," responded Dan Giles.

At this juncture of the meeting the dinner bell rang, and as it had been definitely decided to seek Tim's assistance and to bend all their forces on him to handle Ansel, the gathering dispersed.

They saw Tim and asked him to talk with Ansel about the proposed "Anti-Bitter Law," and to try and prevail on him not to make any move that would ruin the future prospects of Squirmtown.

Tim immediately promised to use his influence on Ansel in behalf of the business interests, but reminded them that the old gentleman had become quite egotis-

tical since election, and that it would undoubtedly be difficult to reason with him about the matter. "His whole hobby is temperance, and you know what that means?" said Tim to Deacon Squirm and Dan Giles as they discussed the matter.

Tim did take an earnest interest in the alarming condition, and was very much concerned about the dangers from such a law to the business interests of the place. He talked the matter over with Ansel, and tried to reason with him about the serious effect an "Anti-Bitter Law" would have upon business in general throughout the district; but Ansel had become desperate in his desire to do something for the cause of temperance and was immovable.

Tim was so much interested that he took a team and drove out to Squirmtown to see some of the bitters people, and when he called on Dan Giles he found a number of the proprietors congregated there, and they seemed awfully glad to see him, as they were so confident in his ability to influence Ansel that they were quite hopeful that his visit was to herald good news to them of what Ansel would do.

"I saw Mr. Hicks," said Tim, "and am awful sorry to report that he is very set, and that I have been unable to do anything with him. He is really insane on the subject; he told me that his first principle was for temperance, that his second was to stick to his text, and that he's going to put the law through if it ruins the whole nation. He practically told me that now that he is elected, he does not propose to have anybody dictate to him. I'm awful sorry, but felt so interested

that I concluded to come up and tell you that I have done all that I can do in your interests."

"I'm disappointed," said one of the Hunt boys; "I was quite sure that he would listen to you."

"I've bin riled ever since I hearn tell o' this 'Anti-Bitter Law,' " said Dan Giles.

"I'm goin' down bymby and will tell Ansel that he's a reg'lar natur'-born fool," emphatically said Deacon Squirm.

"I think," said Hunt, "that it would be a good plan for a party of five or six of us to go together and call on Ansel, and perhaps we might succeed in combing those notions out of the old man's head."

They all agreed that it would be a feasible thing to do, and that it might bring about a satisfactory result.

They held a conference with Ansel that evening, and about all the satisfaction they received from the member-elect was, "I'm a-goin' to stick to my text, and you can't get me ter go back on my principles fer ther sake of whims and friends nor nobody else. I'm a temperance man, I be."

The next day when the proprietors of the bottling establishments met to talk over their deplorable situation and the crisis they might expect, Deacon Squirm was the first to open the conference, and he commenced, "'cordin to last night's talk with that tarnel fool, 'tain't no use talkin' ter him; I've 'bout made up my mind, bein' as ther burglars didn't clean me out, guess I kin live even if I don't put up no more blueberry bitters."

"Ain't gettin' scairt a'ready," said Dan Giles.

"Oh, no, but re'illy every time it storms I have the

reumatiz so stiddy that I've been tellin' my wife we'd got 'nough to take care o' us ther rest o' our days, and mebbe I'd quit bizziness altogether," said Deacon Squirm.

"I knowed 'twarn't no use tryin' ter make no com-
pramize with Ansel," said the old man Spencer; "he's
dreadful sot; I'm 'fraid Ansel would pitch on me fust,
cause he allus blamed me for breakin' up a match 'twixt
him an' ther Widder Garland."

"Cal'late 'twill be no use goin' agin' ther law, 'cause
it will be thun'drin' hard to back Ansel down, if he gets
that anti-law put thro'," said Deacon Squirm.

"If Ansel gets ther law thro' he'll have the hull o us
in jail within six months unless we quit bizziness," said
the old man Spencer.

"'Twas all an axident anyway, his bein' 'lected," said
Dan Giles, "but then as he's 'lected, he'll do as he
pleases, and I think it would be fo'lish for us ter try
ter do bizness if he is a-goin' ter legislatur. Wouldn't
have my name mixed up with a likker case, and disgrace
my dar'ters for ther whole Barrens. And I cal'late An-
sel would jest like ther glory o' pullin' us all down to
high court in ther spring. I'm goin' ter quit in time,
and not be sorry bumby.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SYNDICATE.

DURING an afternoon while the Village Loafers' Association was holding its daily session at the office of Sampson's tavern, a short, red-faced man who sat on the counter said, "Ain't that 'air Ansel Hicks a grate one ter send ter Legislater?"

"That's so," said a tall, lank individual who was standing up and leaning against a post, "but 'twas an axident; no one 'spected ther deestriet ter go Republiken, so nobody ever 'onet thought of Ansel's bein' 'lected."

After a moment's silence the person sitting on the counter said, "Accordin' ter what they sed 'bout his storebooks when he failed an' went inter insolv'cy, he can't know 'nough ter go ter 'Gusty (Augusta) and reppresent us, 'cause they sed it 'ud take a Phillydelphy lawyer ter figger out one of his 'ccounts."

"I calc'late he'll just spile the biziness of this place just the same, if he stops 'em puttin' up blueberry bit-ters," said Eben Moody, who sat in the middle of the room and seemed to be acting as chairman of the gathering, "and I'm 'fraid he's so sot agin' ther old man Spencer, and some more of 'em, 'taint no use ter try ter make no comprimise with him."

"They're mighty scairt about it, and they all got

tergither ter see what could be done with the old fellow, but 'twa'n't any gre't satisfaction, 'cause the more they sed ter Ansel the more he seemed to be pizen'd agin' them, and when they found ther' warn't a shadder of a chance ter do anything with him they giv it up. 'Twill make a big diff'rence with bizness 'round here I tell yer," said Joe, the proprietor of the tavern.

"Well, they can't drive the Hunt brothers out of business," said Eben in a boasting manner, "'cause 'cordin' ter what I've hearn, they are goin' right ahead, and they're goin' to keep right along in bizness and will defy Ansel, and I hear some t'others are goin' ter do ther same thing."

"Yes, I heard the same report; some one sed they were all goin' to do so," said Joe, "but I understand they found 'twould be no use and they fin'lly giv up that notion."

"Well, I don't re'lly know, but they say some will want to stand from under, if that old fellow gets his law through," rejoined a travelling man that happened to be there when the all-important topic of the day was being disussed.

"Looks as though the prospects of this village won't be very good if that's the case," said Eben. Just then the stage drove up in front of the door, and a short, thick-set man with full beard got out and entered the tavern, registered, and was assigned to the corner room over the office.

When the new arrival went to his room, the subject changed as to who and what the business of the stranger might be. Ame Blibbers said, "Wonder who that is."

"Looks like a feriner," responded Eben.

"No, don't think he's a feriner, but b'lieve he looks like a Jew," said Ame, with rather a puzzled air.

"Yes, he's either a feriner or a Jew I should say," said the landlord, as though his opinion on the subject might be as good as any of the others.

"Well, I bet the cider for the crowd that he's a Jew," said Ame, daring the whole association.

"I'll take that bet, 'cause he hain't no Jew; he's a feriner," said Eben, in answer to Ame's offer to bet on the ancestry of the stranger, and as they were about to arrange the terms of the wager, the new guest came downstairs, stepped to the counter, handed one of his cards to the landlord, at the same time saying in a low tone, "I vant ter puy some lant."

"Want ter buy land," said Joe, "why, bless yer life, there's plenty of it 'round here, and guess yer can buy all yer want, an' at yer own price too."

"Vell I's vant cheep landt," said the stranger.

"Cheap land! well, I guess you can get it at almost any price you would be willin' ter pay for it. What in the world do you want of it?" asked Joe, in his usual curious manner.

"I haf a man vat wants ter make a ranch ter raise Angora goats," answered the real-estate man.

"Here, Eben, you take this gen'leman over and introduce him to Deacon Squirm; he's got mor'gidges now on a good many old places, and guess he'd be willin' ter pay c'mission ter anybody that 'ud help him sell 'em," said Joe.

They proceeded to the deacon's, whose first proposition was that if the stranger would buy out his bitter

business, he might sell all the land that he had any interest in at a very reasonable price.

"Vell, I don't mint ter look at your beeziness, and perhaps I might sell it fer you. I sometimes act fer peoples that vants ter sell."

"Very well, sir," said the deacon, "if you will take hold and help me to sell out, I will pay you well for it. But I can't talk any more with you now. Come over ter-morrer an' I'll talk with you. I'm in a dredful hurry ter go down an' see Tim Cronin 'bout the thund'rin' old fool that's been 'lected to the legislatery, who's a-goin' to stop us a-sellin' bitters, so, yer see, if we can't do bizness no longer I'm goin' ter sell out."

"Vell, maybe if it's that way, perhaps I don't vants ter puy. If yer can't sell des bitters, vy I don't vants te peesiness," said the stranger.

"Well, I can't talk any more with you now, because I'm goin' down again ter see Tim. Good day, come over again and perhaps we can trade," said the deacon in a flutter of excitement.

That afternoon a number of the business people went down to see Tim, and after discussing the situation a while he said to them, "I have been giving the matter serious thought, and really believe I have devised a scheme whereby we may be able to handle Mr. Hicks. That is if you people will agree to the proposition."

"Agree ter anything, so long as we won't be drove out o' business. What is the scheme, Tim? Let's hear it; we are all anxious you know," said Dan Giles.

"Well it is this; while I would not think of offering Mr. Hicks any money to change his course of action, I

think that there may be some other practical method of restraining his actions.

"What is it? Let's know what you mean, Tim?" anxiously asked Deacon Squirm.

"It is this," said Tim, "you know Mr. Hicks has no direct interest in your business, and for that reason cannot be made to feel the injury that the new law would cause you. People are all more or less selfish, you understand. He is interested in temperance, but is not interested in the bitter business, so he is partial to his interests, and not to yours, therefore that is probably the reason why we are unable to do anything with him. Now let's make him interested in the bitter business, and we will then see which he will be most favorable to, the one he can derive a profit from in money or the one in which the dividends will only be imaginary glory."

"An interest! why how'd that stop him?" inquired the old man Spencer.

"I mean that you will let him enjoy a share of the profits of the business. A consideration like that will have more persuasion on him than any talk you or I can have," said Tim.

"How er yer goin' ter do it, Tim? We'll do anything you say 's all right, Tim. All we ask is ter get Anse switched off his temp'rance notions, for I s'pose he'll ruin ther business ter smash if we don't," said the deacon.

"That's it, how be yer a-goin' ter gag ther old idiot, anyway?" again inquired Mr. Spencer.

"The plan is this; form a corporation, consolidate all the blueberry-bitter interests, conduct the entire industry

under one management, take Mr. Hicks in with you and make him president of the company. In fact you will then have a trust; combine all the interests under one head,—even the temperance faction of this section will then be united with the bitter trade. This is an era of trusts, and combinations seem to be the order of the day. I think that if you make the old gentleman president of the company it will please him. Then, of course, you will give him a few shares of promoters' stock in the corporation, same as the organizers of large companies usually receive," explained Tim.

"That 'ill be all right. You get Anse ter stand fer it, and every one on us will jine yer in company," responded the deacon.

"Yes, we'll make Anse precident, an' that 'ill make 'im feel bigger'n he does now," said the old man Spencer.

"Who'll be General Business Manager?" inquired Harry Hunt.

"That's so; who'd it better be? Why, Tim, you're jest the cut fer it," said the deacon.

And it was then and there understood that Tim was fully authorized to submit the proposition.

Ansel was very favorably impressed with the suggestion, but was rather selfish in regard to the shares that he should hold. He insisted that his influence would prove of great value to the new company, and that at least fifty per cent of the entire stock should be given to him for services that he might render the company in the future.

Tim reminded him that it was much more than he

should expect, but the old gentleman was determined that he must have a half interest in the enterprise — yet he was not going to invest any money in it. The propensity of Ansel to be selfish and unreasonable had a tendency to almost dishearten Tim from further efforts to secure a compromise between the business men and Ansel. He went up to Squirmtown again, and after leaving his horse at Joe Sampson's stable, started up street to the deacon's, but met the deacon, Dan Giles and Ben Duncan in the street. Tim told them Mr. Hicks was willing to be president of the company.

"Good! knew't you'd fetch him," said Dan Giles.

"Hold on please, Mr. Giles, till I get through," said Tim. "But the old fellow wants fifty per cent of the whole business. I've done my best, and now you can do as you think best — give him fifty per cent or not."

"We won't do no sich thing," said Dan Giles, almost exasperatedly. "'Tis blackmail; wus'n that; I'll give everything I've got away b'fore I'll give that old idiot anything now."

"So 'll I," joined in Deacon Squirm.

"Don't get frightened, gentlemen. Really I do not think that Mr. Hicks has sufficient influence to secure the passage of such a law," said Tim.

"Don't care; I've made up my mind ter sell, an' I'm goin' out o' the bizness anyway if I'd only find some one ter buy. B'fore Anse wuz 'lected could sold ter most any one, an' fer a good price, but now I don't know how 't 'ill be. If some on them fellers that wuz here from Boston last spring ter buy me out 'ud come 'long now, p'raps they wouldn't know nothin' 'bout Anse's bein' 'lected an' I'd sell to 'em," said the deacon.



"I'D BUY YOU OUT QUICK, IF I HAD SUFFICIENT MEANS, AND RUN THE RISK
OF MR. HICKS TROUBLING ME."

At this juncture Tim showed great sagacity and business wisdom. I'd buy you out quick if I had sufficient means, and run the risk of Mr. Hicks troubling me," said Tim.

"No, p'raps he wouldn't trouble you, Tim. But if yer want ter buy me out, money or no money, yer can, and yer can have all ther time ter pay me yer want, so long's yer give me six per cent," said the deacon.

"I'll sell yer mine, too, an' yer can pay me jest ther same way, for I want yer to have it, jest ter see how yer'll handle Anse," said Dan Giles.

"Mine, too," said Spencer.

"All right, gentlemen, I'll buy out each of you, providing the other parties engaged in the business will combine with me and form a syndicate," responded Tim.

"Ye'll have ter give Anse fifty per cent," said the deacon.

"I don't care about Anse," responded Tim.

"Tim, don't give Anse a dam' thing. Bet yer can beat him out in a fight, 'cause you know how t' do them things, but yer see we don't know nothin' 'bout it. If yer git up a war with Anse, an' yer need any money ter back yer up in ther scramble fer supremacy, the deacon an' me 'ill help yer out; won't we, deacon?" said Dan.

"Yes, sir; it'll do me lots o' good ter see yer give Anse a wollop in' after all ther fuss he's a-kicked up."

Tim bought out several others engaged in the business, and then the remainder of them had such confidence in Tim's honesty and ability that they readily

combined with him in forming the American Blueberry-Bitter Co., with control of all the blueberry plains, the business, labels and copyrights of the entire bitter industry. In this deal Tim owned a controlling interest of the stock, and was made president and manager of the company.

"Mr. Hicks, we have formed a corporation," said Tim, "and have blended all the blueberry-bitter interests, so that the industry will be carried on in future under one management. I am in hopes to be able to raise the standard of the goods, and to conduct the business in accordance with up-to-date plans."

"Am mighty glad yer've got it all fixed up, Tim," responded Ansel.

"Yes, it was quite an important transaction for a man like me to carry out, and I fully realize that it will require all my energies and attention to make a business of its magnitude a successful one."

"When be I a-goin' ter get my share of it, Tim?"

"Your share! I was not aware that you had any interest in it."

"Of course I've got a share in it."

"You have invested no money in it to my knowledge. Perhaps it is your intention to buy some shares of the capital stock, and if so I'd be very glad to see you own an interest with us."

"No, I haven't got no money to put in. But I'm to have a half interest, ain't I?"

"No, I don't think so. I do not know of any reason why you should harbor such a delusion."

"Hain't I? Well, what are yer a-goin' ter do if there's a law put thro' ter stop yer a-sellin' bitters?"

“Who is going to have such a law enacted?”

“Why, I be.”

“You should wait until you are legally elected and qualified before you tell about what legislation you are going to create.”

“Hain’t I already ’lected?”

“No, not legally.”

“I’d like ter know ther reason o’ it? what d’yer mean, Tim? Don’t yer go a-bluffin’ me, or I’ll drive yer comp’ny ter bankrup’cy. I’m ’lected, and ev’ry big man in ther State’s ’lready a-writin’ me fer support on one thing or t’other. I’ll show yer that yer er got a man o’ influence ter deal with.”

“Mr. Hicks, it is evident that you are not aware that the election at Squirmtown was conducted in an irregular manner, even the returns of the vote are defective, and the entire vote is likely to be thrown out if anybody sees fit to contest the matter. I’ve been up an’ examined the records, and the whole thing is irregular. If you were not so unreasonable as to really demand more than a large share, perhaps we might have considered the matter in a different light, and have given you a few shares of stock. But since you have shown such a selfish and despotic spirit, we do not intend to give you a single share.”

“An’ yer don’t mean ter say t’ I hain’t been ’lected at all. What a tormented way yer a-takin’ ter cheat me out o’ my victery.”

“Mr. Hicks, I wish to have you distinctly understand that I have done nothing to cheat you out of an election. I’ve simply examined the records, found some defects, and have informed you that the records are defective.”

"Wish't Lawyer Glidden was here, an' he wouldn't let you a-whiffle me out o' my 'lection," said Ansel, lamentingly.

"I am not trying to whiffle you out of your rights. Possibly, nobody else beside me knows anything about those defects. However, I shall say nothing about it to the Democrats. All I ask you is to let my business and my affairs alone."

Ansel was so overcome by the startling disclosure made to him about the serious doubt of his election that he made no response to Tim, but went directly to his home. He was really in an agony of grief. His ambition was shattered, his scheme to secure fifty per cent of the business was a fizzle, and his plans to dictate to his neighbors were frustrated. He remained at home, where he sank into a fit of despondency. Melancholy and despair took the place of dreams of a dignified position in the community, and he showed signs of weakness that indicated the danger of a mental collapse. It was a blow that he was unable to stand, and for weeks he was under the care and treatment of his physician.

Although Tim had found the defects in the election records, he never said anything about the matter to anybody, except what he told Ansel.

No further move was made in regard to the enactment of anti-bitter law, and the business continued to grow until it became one of the largest enterprises in the State. Tim proved capable of managing a business of such magnitude, and became the most prominent man in the district. He held the key to the power of votes, controlled the blueberry lands, and was general mana-

ger of the chief industry of the section. And as Joe Sampson said one day, while they were speaking of Tim's remarkable and successful career, "Well, boys, they can say now what they've a mint ter 'bout Tim, but he's King o' ther Barrens after all."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE "BLUEBERRY" MINE.

A MAN with long hair, wearing thick boots and a blue flannel shirt, sat in a rough little room in the boss's shanty of the "Blueberry" Mine in Idaho beholding a small photograph he held in his hand. He was the figure of astute loneliness, and plucked at a sparse and bristly brown beard. He was an amiable and intelligent man, but the training of a nice or even respectable-looking beard was beyond his skill. Could any of his lady acquaintances have seen him at this time they would have been amused. The blueberry mine was located in a dismal canyon, in a wretched mountain side, but its ore was rich, and yielded the owner a snug fortune each month. Its value had been disclosed by the untiring efforts of the shrewd man with the coarse beard, and the profits were deposited with his banker in Seattle with prompt regularity. Yet that did not reconcile his mind to the cheerless locality of the mine. The photograph was of a young lady. The eyes were frank, the lips smiling, and the head was covered with a mass of wavy hair. He was pleased to even look at the picture, which to him failed to show the real beauty of her face.

While he was greatly interested in the subject of the photograph his mind seemed to be fully occupied, for he paused, stared at the distance for a time, and appeared

to be in deep thought. He was simply in a state of reminiscence, thinking of the delightful days that were so precious to him. He felt that the friends whom he left behind in the Blueberry district were more congenial than any of his new acquaintances. "Mandy," he muttered to himself, "wonder if I shall ever see her again." "Nonsense," he continued, "I must awake from this stupor and not allow myself to think over affairs of this nature. There, what's the use, after all? Half of the time I really don't know whether I'm working this mine or thinking of her. I'm going East mighty soon, even if this claim's jumped before I get half way to Maine."

Presently the mail carrier's mule came down the mountain road and stopped in front of the shanty. The door opened and a regular Westerner blurted out, "Here's yer mail."

The miner, hurriedly covering the photograph with an old newspaper, reached his hand for a solitary letter that comprised his mail. It was a long envelope, of the size used by the legal fraternity, addressed to him in coarse, brusque handwriting. Holding it up he beheld the postmark "*Providence, R. I.,*" and proceeded to tear it open, while conjecturing as to what news it might bring. This is what its contents were:—

PROVIDENCE, R. I.,—.

Dear Glidden: I have been trying for months to locate you, and at last procured your address from a medical student that is in college with your brother. I need you as a witness in an important case to be tried at Los Angeles on the second Monday of next month.

Be sure and meet me at Los Angeles on the Saturday before the case opens, and I will pay you liberally for your time and services. Should you need money to pay your fare to Los Angeles, telegraph me and I will advance the necessary funds. Will you meet me there? Answer at once.

Yours most sincerely,
HENRY BURGESS.

He perused the letter slowly, studied each word, and then laid it on the rude table, picked it up again and read and reread it. It was a puzzle to even imagine what the nature of the case could be, but he sat down at once to answer the letter. He wrote briefly, but explicitly: —

BLUEBERRY MINE,
DISMAL HOLLOW, IDA.

HON. HENRY BURGESS, Providence, R. I.

Dear Mr. Burgess: Your letter received. I shall meet you in Los Angeles at the time stated.

Yours respectfully,
ISAAC GLIDDEN.

"There," he said when he had finished, "That will let the old man know that he can depend upon my being there. I would really like to meet him again. But wonder what the case is about." Sitting down he again sank into deep thought, and in a few minutes awoke from this reverie as if startled.

"What date is this?" he said to himself. "Well, if I haven't got to get out of this early next week, or I'll be apt to be a little late in meeting Lawyer Burgess down in Los Angeles," he continued.

He at once commenced to plan about the operation

of the mine during his absence, and gave an occasional thought about what a change there would be in his appearance when he reached the city and procured some new clothes.

One day as he saddled his mule he gave a last word of instruction to his petrified foreman and started for Boise City to take the train. As he rode his mule along the deep mountain side his thoughts ran to sentimental affairs, and after a time he said, "The spell is broken. Some urgent matter like Burgess' letter was needed to stir me from these diggings. Now that I have taken a vacation I guess I'll continue my course, and when the trial is over go to Maine and see if Mandy ever married."

When he left Blueberry Falls, nearly eight years previously, his departure was prompted by a telegraphic dispatch to him that his mother was ill. He and Mandy Garland had spent the evening at the home of Deacon Squirm, and the message was not delivered to him until late in the evening when he returned to the hotel where he made his home. He was so affected, when he finished reading the telegram at the news which it contained, that his heart throbbed with grief. He was so much distressed in mind, thinking of the uncertain condition of his mother, that he immediately harnessed his horse, and started for Bangor to make connection with the Pullman train for Boston. By the time his horse was harnessed the clerk at the hotel had retired and there was nobody around; even if there had been, Ike was so worried about his mother's condition that he would probably have gone without saying anything about when or where he was going.

His mother lingered for several months and he remained by her side to the end. In the course of several weeks after he reached his old home, it was evident that there were no signs of her immediate recovery, so he wrote to the stable keeper in Bangor, where he had left his horse, to dispose of the team and send him the proceeds of the sale. Then when the saddest event of his life had taken place and the burial was over, he again began to think of his own affairs and was preparing to return to Maine. "Sorrow comes in battalions, never alone." On the eve of his intended departure for his adopted home in the Pine Tree State, a telegram was received by him from his brother Hiram, who was then in the West. It simply read, "Having trouble, come if possible and help me"; but the import of such a communication from a brother caused anxiety and conjecture as to the nature of the misfortune. He immediately started without further warning, and in due time reached Boise City. There he joined Hiram, who informed him about a mining claim in Dismal Hollow owned by him, which had been jumped by some prospectors while he was away to procure gear and supplies to open a shaft, and that there was to be a contest before the territorial court in regard to the title of the claim. Hiram was of the temperament that is easily annoyed and had sent for his brother, who was composed of the qualities of pluck and determination, to stand by him in the controversy about the ownership of the property he had staked out.

Ike went about the matter with his usual adroitness, and finally secured a compromise for a small considera-

tion, and with Hiram took possession of the claim. The ore from the excavations seemed to give promise of value, and Ike entered into partnership with his brother and began active work on the vein.

The location was in a very lonely place, where they seldom had any communication with the outside world; the lode had been dipped to the east and lost; Hiram became discouraged, and resolved to return to New England and devote himself to the study of medicine, a notion he had cherished since his boyhood. Ike, with his usual steadfastness, bought Hiram's interest in the claim, and with great firmness of mind continued to work the shaft with renewed vigor. He pushed the labors with untiring energy and pluck, and in a short time found the lode again, where he uncovered a bed of the richest ore to be found in the West. This great discovery had a tendency to concentrate his entire attention and effort to the operation and development of the mine, to such an extent that for the time being he almost forgot about his affairs in the East.

So closely had he clung to the interests of his venture that in all that period he did not permit his inclination to meditate on leaving Dismal Hollow, except for brief visits to Boise City to procure the supplies with which to carry on his rich and profitable enterprise. There he was so preoccupied in acquiring wealth that it required something like the pressing and quite mysterious letter from Lawyer Burgess to urge him to break the spell of his lonely life in Dismal Hollow, and visit scenes more congenial to a person of his happy disposition.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE WIGGIN ESTATE.

It was evening when Ike reached Los Angeles. He found Lawyer Burgess at the most fashionable hotel in the city, anxiously waiting for him, and received a very cordial greeting from the gentleman who was so much interested in his presence there at that particular period.

"Glidden, I'm glad. Mighty, yes, Glidden,—mighty glad to see you. I searched all over the country for you, but—ha! ha!—found you at last," exclaimed Mr. Burgess in great joy.

"What do you want of me, Mr. Burgess?" inquired Ike.

"There's to be a trial here Monday, and I want you for a witness to verify some signatures," responded the lawyer.

"What signatures?" again asked Ike.

"You know this Wiggin estate has been in law ever since the old fellow died, and that is nearly twenty years ago. Almost every year a new impostor has turned up claiming to be an heir of Wiggins, and I've had a great struggle fighting them off. But finally I learned that the legal heir of the estate was a young lady up in Maine, and I sent Marks up there and bought her out. The remainder of the facts you already know, so it is to prove that transaction I want you here," answered Burgess.

"What transaction? tell me something about it; I do not seem to comprehend the case," said Ike, somewhat nonplussed at the vague details unfolded.

"The deal that was made the time that Marks was up there and staid with you. We knew that you were located in the vicinity of that girl's home, and I suggested that he could probably get you to assist him in finding the girl and no doubt aid in carrying out the negotiations. And you witnessed the deed, you remember, and I want you to testify as to the genuineness of her signature and to also verify your own signature upon the deed," said Burgess.

"Why, I never saw Marks when he was in Maine," returned Ike.

"Oh, you must have seen him, as your name is on the document as a witness."

"It cannot be possible that my name appears upon the document, because I have no recollection of a transaction of that nature, and I'm sure I haven't seen Marks since I saw him in your office while I was collecting rents for you," positively said Ike.

"This is a most singular affair," broke out Burgess in surprise. "Can't you verify that transaction by your testimony? Can't you help me? I need a witness, and was cock-sure that you were just the man and the only witness I required to sustain my title to this property."

"I would be glad to help you in any honorable way, but will not swear to the truth of a matter of which I know nothing. Where is Marks, and where is the deed?" said Ike.

Reaching into his valise for the deed Burgess blurted

out in irritated accents, "Marks! the scamp disappeared only a few weeks after he got this deed for me, and I haven't been able to locate him since he skipped out."

Ike looked at the signature of the witness upon the paper purporting to be a deed and exclaimed, "This is a forgery!" Then he observed the date. "The date is more than two months later than I have been in Maine." And when he saw the name of the grantor, Amanda Garland, his eyes emitted balls of fire, and his voice muttered, "Mandy Garland! Mandy Garland! I tell you, Mr. Burgess, this is a bogus document. This is not my signature, and that is not the signature of Amanda Garland."

"My God!" exclaimed Burgess, "and are you sure?"

"Yes, I am sure. I am familiar with that girl's handwriting, and it is not her signature," returned Ike.

"This is a horrible blow," said Burgess, with a cold chill creeping over him. "It's appalling. It means a loss of more than a million dollars. I am ruined," he cried in confusion.

"How much did Marks tell you that he paid the young lady for her interest?" asked Ike.

"I gave him five thousand dollars, and told him that if he could not secure her interest for that amount to draw on me for an additional sum not to exceed ten thousand dollars," answered Burgess.

"How much did he represent to you that he was obliged to pay her?" again asked Ike.

"Oh, ho, he was gone about a week, and returned with the deed, and told me that you and he persuaded the girl and her mother to sell out for the five thousand dollars I gave him," answered Burgess.

"Well, you see he never even went to Blueberry Falls, or he never should have used my name as a witness. I was not there on the date of that deed. He deceived you, and embezzled the money you gave him," said Ike.

"Confound the thief! He is the cause of my ruin. Yes, that is why he stepped out when he did," said Burgess, the flutter of his heart causing him to breathe with apparent distress.

"Is Miss Garland to be here at the trial Monday?" interestedly asked Ike.

"Yes, she and her mother are here, and have been here for some months, preparing the case against me."

"Is it possible that they are here now? Where are they located?"

"They are boarding at the house directly across the street. Are you acquainted with them?"

"Oh yes, I'm well acquainted with them," answered Ike in a quiet tone.

"Well, then, Glidden, perhaps it is not so bad after all. Through your acquaintance with those people you may be just the chap I need. Perhaps you may be able to bring us together, so that I can buy out her interest. I'll pay her one hundred thousand dollars if she will sign clear, and I'll give you ten thousand dollars if the deal goes through," said Burgess in his usually shrewd manner, and brightening up with this new idea.

"No, I thank you, Mr. Burgess; I would do anything that is right for you, but I love that girl and cannot consent to be a party to such a transaction."

"What! you in love with that girl?"

"Yes, and I'll see that Mandy Garland gets what be-

longs to her out of that estate, if it is in my power to do anything to assist in establishing her rights," said Ike, as he bade Burgess "good night" and left the room.

It was then nearly ten o'clock. He loitered on the veranda, wondering in which of the houses across the street Mandy made her home. Finally he heard in the house directly opposite singing in a high soprano voice. He could not content himself to remain there quietly, but arose and walked in the glimmer of the electric light part way across the street, and there listened again to satisfy himself that his ears were true to the recollection of the sounds of her voice. "Can it be Mandy?" he said to himself. "Yes, it surely is her voice."

The mere sound of her voice had unmanned him. His first impulse was to call and see her, but on second thought he wondered if she would care to see him. So he hesitated. He had been away from the scenes of civilization so long that he felt somewhat timid about entering into the social circle of a city home, particularly if there were others present beside her and her mother. He finally decided to call the next day.

Although tired after the long train ride from Boise City, he did not go to his room until the last flicker of light in the parlor of the house across the street had disappeared. When he did retire there seemed to be no rest for him, for he rolled and tossed in a delirium of unrest. He dreamed and woke, and dreamed and woke again that night, and whether waking or sleeping he imagined that he could hear the voice of Mandy Garland, until softly from the rosy east came the king of

day shedding his light and sunshine. He earnestly wished to see the face of the one whose very voice could so affect him.

Sunday afternoon when he did call something of her old timidity returned, and she was at first inclined to evade meeting him; but when she ventured at length to lift her eyes to the face of the tall fine-looking man before her, a thrill of joy and pride ran through her heart, and extending her hand she said, "Mr. Glidden, why it's you, isn't it? I'm really glad to see you. How long have you been in the city?"

"I arrived last evening," responded Ike, and the pleasure of the meeting seemed to be unbounded.

"When did you leave home?" inquired Ike.

"Oh, we have been living here nearly eight years."

"Then you must have left there soon after my departure."

"Yes, within a few weeks I think."

"I presume you hear from home frequently."

"Oh, yes indeed. We receive letters and papers quite regularly."

"How is my old friend your uncle, Deacon Squirm?"

"Oh, his health is quite good, but you know the shock of the robbery somewhat affected his nerves for a time, but he got over it, so I think his health is fairly good."

"What robbery?"

"Why, haven't you ever heard about the time his safe was broken open and robbed?"

"No, I've not heard a word from Blueberry Falls for nearly eight years. And Deacon Squirm was robbed. When? tell me about it."

"The burglar that blew open the safe was a man who had been boarding with uncle, and who was afterwards arrested in Boston."

"When did that happen?"

"It was the same night that you and I were there to tea."

"Why, then, that must have been the night I left there."

"Yes, it was that same night, but — but — they got the man that did it, and all the stolen things were afterward restored to uncle."

"That same night?" said Ike, perfectly amazed.

"Yes, and it was that pious-appearing man that had been boarding with uncle during the summer," said Mandy.

"How seemingly strange! and it was he who robbed your uncle! How long after the robbery did they arrest him?" inquired Ike.

"Oh, he was arrested within two or three days after that, and they telegraphed to uncle."

"Well, let me tell you something. When I was in Providence that man used to come to the office where I worked to see a young lawyer, and his ministerial air attracted my attention. One day I took the liberty to inquire about the distinguished-looking client, and was told that he was a member of a gang of crooks. And do you know when I saw the men who were boarding at your uncle's I felt quite sure that one of them was that same fellow, and was somewhat distrustful of him? As I was not sure, I said nothing about it, but made up my mind to study him more closely, and after that every

time I called there the boarders were out strolling through the fields, and I didn't see them again. They probably knew I was a lawyer and were avoiding me. Anyhow I did not like the appearance of the man the time I did see him at Deacon Squirm's," said Ike.

"You are a pretty good judge of men after all," said Mrs. Garland.

"It seems so, or at least I was in that case."

Then Ike related the cause of his sudden departure from Blueberry Falls, told them about meeting the pious man on the train, and described the circumstances of the hurried arrest in Boston.

While Ike was harnessing his horse on the night he left Blueberry Falls, he heard the sound of an explosion in the direction of Squirmtown, and at first wondered what it could be, but the sorrowful words of the telegram absorbed his mind so much that he gave no further thought to the unusual noise. When he had driven a short distance on the road he heard a horse and carriage coming behind him. Soon it dashed by him at break-neck speed. He wondered at such wild driving, and tried to overtake the horse and carriage, but this being impossible he gave up the chase.

The next morning at Bangor the pious gentleman whom he had seen at Deacon Squirm's got on board the train. His clothes were covered with mud that had evidently splattered from carriage wheels while driving on a country road, and he carried a large satchel. At that time he did not look like a man in delicate health, as he apparently had lost all the pallor of an invalid. While on the train he acted strangely; in fact his con-

duct was so peculiar that Ike could not help giving his whole attention to studying him.

Ike finally became satisfied that he was the identical crook that he had seen in Providence, and that undoubtedly he had been up in Maine on a pilfering trip. About that time there had been a series of burglaries committed in different parts of the State, and Ike concluded that he was one of the gang that was then operating in the State. When the train reached Boston Ike was so interested in learning about the schedule of the Vermont trains that he lost sight of the man.

But to his surprise and astonishment Ike saw the same man attempt to board his train when it was just about to start for Vermont and Canada, and on the spur of the moment called a policeman and charged the man with being a burglar, and told the officer that he was wanted in Maine.

The train hauled out while the officer was taking him into custody, and Ike never learned what they did with the man, but many times afterwards his conscience troubled him for having caused the arrest of a man who perhaps was innocent of having done wrong to any person. Although Ike characterized the man as a robber, he never for a moment surmised that it was the same person who drove by him at such fearful speed on the night previous. When Ike reached home his mother's condition of health was such that he gave every attention to her, and for some weeks had scarcely even looked upon a newspaper.

"So it was you who caused the arrest of the robber. They said that the man who gave the policeman the

information went away on the train, and they never could find out who it was," said Mandy.

Ike related the circumstances regarding his sudden departure from Blueberry Falls, and told them about his experiences in the mining region of Dismal Hollow. When the clock struck six Ike arose and suggested that he must return to his hotel and see if there was any letter or telegram for him, but he was not permitted to leave until he promised to return and spend the evening with them.

During this time not one word was spoken by either in relation to the Wiggin case.

When Ike returned in the evening he said to Mandy very abruptly, "On what date did you leave home? I've been thinking about something since I was here this afternoon."

"Oh, it was shortly after you went away. The exact date I cannot recall at the moment, but mother remembers."

"Yes, I am quite sure it was on the tenth day of October. Why do you ask?" said Mrs. Garland.

"And haven't you been home since that date?" he continued.

"No, we came directly to California, and have been in this immediate vicinity ever since," responded the mother.

"That's a most singular case of attempted rascality. Why, the deed is dated November 6th, and that was nearly four weeks after you were away from there," said Ike as if he were speaking without regard to the person he was addressing. His mind was dwelling upon the extreme villainy of Marks.

"What deed? To what do you refer please, Mr. Glidden? tell me about it; I do not understand you," said Mandy, wondering about his strange allusion to a deed.

"I mean the deed Lawyer Burgess has," responded Ike.

"Do you know Lawyer Burgess?" nervously inquired Mrs. Garland.

"Yes, indeed. I am well acquainted with him. It was while employed at his office in Providence that I acquired the knowledge of law I had when I opened an office in Blueberry Falls. But then, all I knew about the science of law at that time was not much of a burden to me," responded Ike, as he laughed at the thought of his first adventure in the practice of law.

"And are you acquainted with Lawyer Burgess, the millionaire, that we have been contending with in court all these years? But what did you say about a deed? please be so kind as to tell us about it, Mr. Glidden, won't you?" said Mrs. Garland in a flutter of uneasiness.

"I mean the deed by which Henry Burgess claims to hold title to the Wiggin estate," said Ike, and looking at Mandy he continued, "He has a document purporting to be a conveyance from you to him of all your interests in that estate."

"Heavens! Mercy! What villainy!" shrieked the girl.

"I know it is a fraudulent document. It is dated Blueberry Falls, November 6th, signed by you and witnessed by me; nine weeks after I left Maine, and nearly four weeks later than you had been there. I have seen the deed and know it is a fraud. My name upon it as a

witness is a forgery, and I know that your name was placed upon it by that knave he sent to Maine to purchase your interests," said Ike.

"Of course it is a fraud. Yes, a bogus document," declared Mandy in a spirit of defiance. "That is the case upon which he is depending to keep me out of my property, is it?"

"Yes, but I have told him that it is a case of forgery, and that he could not depend on me for a witness. Yes, and I — yes, I also told him that my sympathies were with you in the case, and hoped I might be instrumental in assisting you to brand his title with fraud."

"How kind you were to do that! We fully appreciate your interest in our behalf, and shall always remember your kindness," said the mother.

"He has always pretended that he had a deed from the legal heir, but I never understood that it was a deed from me which he claimed to hold," said Mandy.

"Yes, it is evidently a deed from you he has had for a basis of title, but I think his hopes are now pretty well shattered," said Ike.

"And you are the important witness he has been trying to locate during all this delay. Every time our lawyer pressed the case for a trial Burgess has secured a continuance on the ground of inability to have his witness present. He was always successful in securing a delay, on account of the positive manner in which he gave assurance to the judge that at the next term he certainly would be able to produce the witness required to verify his title," said Mrs. Garland.

"Strange, how strange, this seems. Why, Ike, while

I thought of you many times since we left home, I never dreamed that you would be the person to assist us in our case. I did not suppose that you had ever heard of the Wiggin estate," said Mandy.

"Ho, I knew about the Wiggin estate long before my residence at Blueberry Falls; but really, Mandy, I never had the least idea that you were in any way interested in that estate," said Ike.

"You knew about the Wiggin estate when you lived at Blueberry Falls?" asked Mandy, a little curious.

"Yes, it is strange that you never said anything to me about being an heir to the estate, because no doubt even at that time I could have assisted you," said Ike.

"Well, I'll tell you. At one time, some years before we met you, we had great hopes of receiving a large legacy. Then there was a rumor that the estate was only a myth, and our hopes were blighted. In fact we were rather ashamed to say anything about our dream of riches, even to our relatives, for fear of being subjected to laughter and ridicule. Some did make a good deal of fun at one time, so we simply said nothing about it to anybody, because we were in doubt ourselves. When the letter did come we got ready and came here, without informing the people there of the object of our trip," said Mrs. Garland.

"How extremely fortunate it is that you should happen here, at a time when we need some one who is interested in us besides our lawyer," said Mandy.

Then Ike showed them the letter he received from Lawyer Burgess, as an explanation for his presence at that particular time, and also related the conversation

which took place with Lawyer Burgess, when the deed was discovered to be a bogus document.

The experience of Mrs. Garland and her daughter during their residence in that city had been a bitter one. They had been there nearly eight years, endeavoring to establish the heirship of Mandy to the property left by Jonathan Wiggin. The case had been carried from one court to another on appeal, and then continued from term to term, on account of the absence of an important witness, until the patience and endurance of mother and daughter were almost exhausted. Many times during that period they had been deficient of the means necessary to pay their board and expenses, and were obliged to seek employment, that they might earn money with which to carry on the litigation then pending. Even at that date they were compelled to live in a very frugal way; but the information they gained from Ike gave them every assurance of a satisfactory settlement of the case at an early date. The remainder of their stay at Los Angeles was made pleasant by the faithful attention given them by Ike, and many happy hours were spent in drives and pleasure trips about the city, and in reminiscences of the blueberry district.

The trial lacked the excitement that had been anticipated, for Lawyer Burgess staked his whole position on the possibility of securing another delay of the proceedings. His attorney, in support of the motion for another continuance, accused "Glidden, the witness to the deed," of having entered into a conspiracy with the grantor to defraud Mr. Burgess, and placed great stress on the fact that "Glidden has openly admitted that he is in love

with that girl." But argument, falsehood and forgery evidently had no more standing in that court, for the judge refused to grant a further continuance and ordered the case set for trial on the following Thursday.

Burgess failed to appear at the time appointed for a trial, and a default was entered against him, rendering a judgment in favor of Amanda Garland as the legal heir of Jonathan Wiggin.

Mrs. Garland and daughter immediately returned to Maine, and entrusted to Ike the business of securing from the court officials the necessary papers for the purpose of obtaining possession of the estate and procuring formal delivery of the property.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“ALL ABOARD.”

EARLY in June Widow Garland and her daughter arrived at Pineville, Maine, and reopened their home, which had been closed during their stay in California. Everything about the house indicated neglect and decay; the shingles were old, the gutters were covered with moss, and the general appearance was that of a place abandoned. However much in need of repair, to them the sentiment of reaching their old home again gave solace and relief even in the thoughts of being able to spend the time in rest and freedom from the cares of litigation.

They had won the case against “Millionaire Burgess,” and were now waiting for the Wiggin estate to be formally delivered to the care and management of their lawyer. Ike remained to assist their attorney in the details of the matter.

Notwithstanding they had been successful in their litigation that had been carried through so many years and caused them so much worry and anxiety, not one word of mention had been made of the case to any of their friends or neighbors.

One day shortly after the arrival a tall, broad-shouldered man, with sombrero hat, left the train at Blueberry Falls, and rode on the bus to the hotel. Some years

had passed since his last visit there, and with that lapse of time some few changes had come to the village. A new landlord had taken possession of the hotel, and even the driver of the bus and the man behind the counter were people that the new arrival had never seen before, yet he found much that was familiar in place and people.

While he was entering the name "Isaac Glidden, Boise City, Idaho," in the hotel register, the clerk addressing a drummer said, "The French doctor made more than a hundred dollars yesterday. That fellow could make a barrel of money here, just as soon as folks find out that he cured Ame Blibbers, if he'd only stay, but he's settled his bill and is going away on the next train."

"Yes, that was a wonderful cure," said the drummer.

"He's a star I tell you; he's better'n any o' those Indian doctors that's been here for a long time," continued the clerk.

"The old fellow has been all doubled up with rheumatism, hasn't he?" inquired the drummer.

"Yes, and he's tried all the doctors round here, and none of 'em could help him one particle," responded the clerk.

"So I have been informed," said the drummer.

"It's wonderful. He just sat Ame down in that chair, rubbed him a little while with his medicine, then told him to straighten up and walk, and he did so. Isn't that astonishing?" said the clerk.

"Do you know what I think about him?" said the drummer. "That doctor is a hypnotist."

“Oh, no, don’t you b’lieve it; he’s a high-class doctor, that’s what he is,” returned the clerk.

While they were talking, a wagon, with an old woman driving, stopped in front of the hotel to inquire of the clerk where that “furrin doctor” was.

“He’s in the parlor treating a patient, but I’ll call him, because if yer want ter see him you’ll have to do so before the next train goes West,” promptly said the clerk.

“Well, dad is out in the wagon. He’s been all drawed up with the rheumatiz, and mom heard last night as how that “furrin doctor” straightened up Ame Blibbers, and this mornin’ we all got tergether and put dad in a wagon on a bed of straw, and I tell yer he howled, for we can’t move him without hurting him.”

The clerk called the doctor, and he went out to the wagon, spoke to the woman and looked in at the old man lying on the straw in the bottom of the wagon, groaning.

“I cannot do anything for you to-day,” said the doctor. “I’m going away on the next train, but shall be here again one week from to-day and then I will cure you,” he added, and re-entering the hotel, he began packing his valise, preparatory to his departure. The old man groaned, and the old woman burst into tears, for her hopes had been raised high after hearing the story about the Blibbers case.

Ike looked out and took a second glance at the old man in the wagon, who was doubled up and shrieking with rheumatic pains, and said to himself, “There, sir, if that ain’t Lickety Billings; old fellow’s all used up

with rheumatism. And that's his wife ; guess I'll go out and speak to the poor old chap."

As Ike was going out he met a man on crutches coming in at the door, who yelled out, "Where's that furrin quack doctor? If he don't give me back the ten dollars he charged me to straighten me out, I'll knock the furrin language out o' his head with one of these crutches. He's a fraud. That's what he is." And Ike, instead of going out to speak to Lickety, naturally paused to learn the cause of the exciting remarks of the cripple, and then recognized him as Ame Blibbers.

It seemed that the cure that the doctor made was not permanent ; during the night the effect of the medicine wore off, and Ame suffered untold agony and misery until morning. He was evidently in a more hopeless condition than before he applied to the strange doctor for relief, and was then coming to pronounce the doctor a humbug, and to demand a return of the money paid to him the day before. The doctor was in the act of picking up his valise when Ame made the startling accusation against him, and said, "Mine frint, you voz crazy."

"Crazy ! I'll make you crazy, if I strike you over ther head with this stick," and just as Ame in a rage was about to strike the doctor, Ike stepped in between them and said "Ame, don't you do that !" and holding the crutch, addressed the doctor. "This is a poor man ; give him back his money. I've known him ten years or more : he's an old friend of mine, and I am going to see that you give him back the money you wrongfully took from him. I am told that you are not a doctor, but that

you use evil powers which you possess, to extract money from the pockets of the extreme poor and afflicted people. I demand that you return this man's money.”

The doctor handed a ten-dollar note to Ame and sneakingly left the hotel for the depot.

Ame, somewhat bewildered, was puzzled to know who this strange man could be, who said he was a friend of his and had known him for ten years. “Mister, I'm a thousand times obleeged ter yer, fer a-helpin' me ter git my money back, an' I'll never forgit yer. What may I call yer name, sir?” said Ame.

“Ike Glidden is my name, and you are the man Ame that introduced me to the most beautiful girl that I ever saw, and I don't suppose that I will ever forget you.”

“Great Scott! so this is Ike, and when did you come? Mighty glad ter see yer, Ike,” as he heartily shook hands with him. “An' that was ther Widder Garlan's dar'ter. She's home now, an' I'll bet yer come ter see her.”

It was but a short time until the news spread throughout the village of the return of Lawyer Glidden. Dennis Bogan, James Hope and many others hurried to the hotel to honor him with words of welcome. In fact, most of the people there remembered him, and regarded him with a kind of surprised curiosity. His return was an event in the affairs of the district. Everybody wondered where he had been, and what he had been doing, but, most of all, were in hopes that he intended to remain with them. He was received by all with the same degree of perfect kindness and cordiality. If any of them ever did cherish hard feelings toward him, it was

only for a time. They were now all glad to see him, and each showed to him the same smile of welcome.

The cause of his hurried departure from them and his sudden call to the West were related, and they were all pleased to learn that he had been successful. The exciting days after the burglary were related to Ike, and somebody told him that the deacon and others had tried to stigmatize him with the guilt of the robbery, until the arrest of the Christian boarder. Ike was amused, but greatly chagrined when he heard of the atrocious cloud that might have hung on his reputation in the eyes of people to whom he had ever been true and faithful. To a mind inclined to take a cynical view of human affairs, a hearty welcome when in the sunlight of innocence from the person who had denounced him in time of apparent adversity is a somewhat bitter experience. But Ike was so mild-tempered and broad-minded that when Deacon Squirm called at the hotel to see him, Ike shook his hand with a warmth which he had never shown to that gentleman before. It was with some perplexity he secured his release from the people, who were extending to him their expressions of respect, that he might drive to the Garlands' homestead. But, with his usual courteous manner, he got into a carriage and drove in the direction of the Borough of Pineville. The distance was but a few miles, and he soon came within view of the Garland home; many were his associations connected with that house, for it was to him a sort of temple of old memories. His heart swelled with happiness at even a sight of the surroundings of that old house.

Mrs. Garland met him at the door, and ushered him

into the parlor, fragrant with flowers and cool with the afternoon breeze through the open windows. Mandy was seated at the piano, and never was her appearance more charming. She was not expecting to be favored on that day with a visit from the man of whom she was thinking so deeply. She heard the entrance of some one, but presumed that it was merely a call by one of the near neighbors. When she looked up and saw Mr. Glidden her eyes glistened with amazement, then she blushed, and trembled with a little embarrassment, as she extended her hand and said, "Why, what a lovely surprise! When did you arrive? Why didn't you write and tell us? I'm so glad to see you; come sit down and tell all about yourself since we parted at Los Angeles."

The next day Ike wandered about town, to meet many old and familiar faces, and to note the changes that had taken place during his absence. Joe Sampson had leased the tavern, and with his family moved to the Falls, where he lived at ease on the rent of his property. Squire Blunt had died, and a younger man was commissioned to perform the official duties of magistrate. James Hope had become a prosperous merchant, and his reputation for honesty and fair dealings extended throughout the country. His mother-in-law, the Widow Brown, was provided with a pleasant home in a part of his beautiful residence on the hill; and often smiled, and told her callers of the day when Katy and her husband came home in tears from the bottling works, and cried because they had both been discharged for some childish pranks, and feared that hunger stared them in the face.

"Mr." Cronin, as the people had been accustomed to prefix their remarks when addressing the most successful man in that section, had married Becca Blunt, and they were occupying the squire's old homestead.

Ike was greatly interested in all the people throughout the district whom he met, and manifested sincere gratification in every instance where he saw a prosperous and changed condition. But there was no event that had occurred during his absence which seemed to give him so much delight as the fact that his friend, Tim Cronin, had ascended to the station of a prudent, thrifty and influential citizen.

The Cronins in their beautiful home tendered receptions, parties, and festivities galore in honor of Mr. Glidden, and upon them seemed to rest a part of the cheerful responsibility of assisting the Garlands in the entertainment of the distinguished visitor.

The story is so old, so common, that probably it will not sufficiently interest you to recount it in detail. As of yore the spirit of hymen was active. On noiseless mount sped the Goddess of Summer, and they who thought the warm period of the year would never pass were surprised when o'er the wooded hills the breath of Autumn came, bearing the yellow leaf and gathering in the golden harvest. As the days advanced things within and without the vicinity of Pineville foretold some unusual event. There came an evening sweeter, brighter and fairer than any of that season. It was the first of October. The long clouds, extending far to the eastward, showed signs of the approach of night, and when at last, the sun immersed in its Western home, the

Hunters' moon shed a soft, pale light over the Garland homestead, Mandy, with the lovelight in her dark blue eyes, was being joined in the bond of matrimony to the man she had loved since the day they first met. The house was filled with friends and relatives, and even the yard in front of the house was thronged with well-meaning country boys.

All listened breathlessly to the nuptial obligations that were being imposed, until the last words of the rites were performed. When the ceremony was over, and the guests were extending pleasant courtesies to the principals of the event, the crowd about the door set up a tumultuous uproar, and the noise of the bells and horns and cheers was almost deafening, for a crowd had gathered there from every section of the blueberry district to celebrate the joyous occasion of the wedding by rendering a grand old-fashioned serenade to the happy couple.

The last glimpse we had of Ike Glidden was that evening, when he and his bride boarded the train, and the conductor announced “All aboard.”

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